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Pre-romantic elements in the satires of Charles Churchill

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PRE-ROMANTIC ELEMENTS IN THE SATIRES OF CHARLES CHURCHILL

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PREFACE

This study has evolved from a paper written on Charles Churchill when I was an undergraduate. The earlier and more limited investigation of the satirist led to the recognition that, even though there has of late been a great deal of needed criticism of his work, several important facets of his writing have yet to be given attention. Churchill's kinship with the acknowledged eighteenth-century pre-romantics is real, and the final determination of his stature as a satirist will need to consider this aspect of his poetry. It is conceivable that the ultimate analysis of Churchill's reputation will add helpful background information on the state of English aesthetics during the latter eighteenth century.

Several debts have been incurred during the process of researching and writing this thesis. Miss Ellen Lord and her competent staff at the Eugene Eppley Library, University of Omaha, were especially helpful to me. As many of the needed materials were unavailable in the immediate vicinity of Omaha, Miss Ella Jane Dougherty of the Inter-Library Loan Department did much to insure that I received the necessary information expeditiously. My Advisor, Dr. Ralph Wardle, patiently read and criticized each chapter and offered many helpful suggestions as to organization and overall improvement of the thesis.

And above all I am grateful to my wife, Carma, for her constant encouragement, understanding, and sacrifice during it all.

E. C. B.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Churchill's Life and Works

> Let one poor sprig of Bay around my head
> Bloom whilst I live, and point me out when dead;
> Let It (may Heav'n indulgent grant that pray'r)
> Be planted on my grave, nor wither there;
> And when, on travel bound, some riming guest
> Roams thro' the Church-yard, whilst his Dinner's dress'd,
> Let It hold up this Comment to his eyes;
> Life to the last enjoy'd, here Churchill lies;
> Whilst (O, what joy that pleasing flatt'ry gives)
> Reading my Works, he cries--here Churchill lives. (145-154)

Churchill commentators frequently quote line 152 of this passage from The Candidate. The poet wanted as much as many another writer to gain a place in the living tradition of English literature, and it is ironic that when he is remembered at all it is for the sensational aspects of his life rather than for his poetry.

As with his successor Byron in England and Ernest Hemingway in twentieth-century America, the satirist became a living legend. His popularity with the contemporary masses during his lifetime is accounted for partly by his spirited defenses of English liberty and partly by the numerous wars and intrigues of his "private" life.

After Churchill's death his assets became his liabilities. As with her darling, Byron, moralistic England refused to distinguish between the man's poetry and his life. The eighteenth century

condemned the poet and his writings as immoral. Not only did he lead a life of dissipation, but he chose to write satiric poetry. And satire is always highly topical. The people and events satirized were soon obscured by time, and before long mentions of the poet were limited to scattered anthologies of the English poets.

The satirist fared even worse in America. Here Churchill's obscurity was nearly complete, but there has been considerable interest shown in his poetry in the twentieth century. For this reason he is little known today in this country, and it is desirable to preface a work of this type with not only a brief account of his life and works but also a history of Churchill biography and criticism to date. This will function as a convenient reference as well as a commentary on much that will be discussed in the analysis that will follow.

Churchill's prompt eclipse after his death is probably the result of the attitude that prevailed toward the life he led. While his actions stimulated much interest, the morality of the day had the effect of discouraging efforts to make an accurate record of the details of the satirist's life and work. What information evolved is incomplete and, because of much inaccuracy, largely unsatisfactory. An attempt will be made to keynote only that information considered factual. In the ensuing account the debt is largely to the efforts of Beatty, Brown, Grant, and Hopkins, all more recent English and American commen-

tators.[1]

Churchill was born in Westminster during February, 1731/2, while that city still remained separate from London. His parents were Anne (d. October 2, 1768) and Charles, an orthodox clergyman. Little is known of his mother, but it has been conjectured that she was Scottish. There were four children, although several others died at birth or during infancy. Churchill had two brothers. John (b. June 12, 1735) was a surgeon-apothecary, and William (b. June 19, 1744) was a clergyman like his father. His sister Patience (b. February 27, 1741/2) was probably engaged to Churchill's friend Robert Lloyd at the time of the latter's early death. John published several editions of his brother's works, and William did him similar service by writing a brief life that was prefaced to one of the editions.

The elder Churchill served as curate (1733) and lecturer (1745) at the Church of St. John the Evangelist in Westminster until his death. He was also responsible for the vicarage in nearby Rainham, Essex, from 1742. The family evidently was poor, and this additional living must have proved helpful.

[1]See Joseph M. Beatty, Jr., "An Essay in Critical Biography--Charles Churchill," PMLA, XXXV (June 1920), 226-246; Wallace Cable Brown, Charles Churchill--Poet, Rake, and Rebel (Lawrence, Kansas, 1953); The Poetical Works of Charles Churchill, ed. Douglas Grant (London, 1956); and Kenneth Hopkins, Portraits in Satire (London, 1958).

Several details of the poet's early life parallel those of his father. He matriculated at Westminster School in May, 1741. This was one of England's finest public schools, and Westminster was enjoying one of the greatest periods in the history of the school. In 1745 Charles placed first in the competitive examinations and became a King's Scholar, which is equivalent to earning a full scholarship in America. As he was competing with a number of men who were to become prominent in the affairs of England in a few years, Churchill's biographers have surmised that the poet showed considerable promise at this early date.

It is relevant to note that the school went beyond the standard classical curriculum and offered also the study of English literature. The boys were encouraged to apply what they learned about poetry to the writing of verse, and the satirist's first attempts at poetry date from this time.

Charles also followed his father to Cambridge, where he is last seen on the rolls on July 8, 1748. Because he had gone there on a Westminster scholarship, there has been a great deal of speculation as to his reasons for leaving.

In 1749 he married Martha Scot. Out of necessity the young couple moved in with Churchill's parents. His family was probably displeased, and the premature marriage forced the poet to find a means

of support. He had early been intended for the church and, although he often said and demonstrated that this was not his preference, the poet had little alternative when this occupation was suggested. In 1751 he went to Sunderland to prepare for the church, and there he probably also had enough time to write poetry. He stayed in Sunderland without incident until 1753, when the family moved as a result of a small bequest to his wife by one of her relatives.

Churchill was ordained a deacon on September 22, 1754. The following day he was presented with parishes at both South Cadbury and Sparkford, Somerset. These posts afforded a modest income, and the times were evidently hard ones of financial distress far away from family and friends. Despite these trials, Churchill held the posts for two years without any apparent problems. He was ordained a priest on December 19, 1756, and became curate to his father at Rainham. With London now near at hand he was within reach of the company of his friends. His income was now greater, but the temptation of London prevented Churchill from relieving his financial concern.

His income was further increased upon the death of his father on September 7, 1758, when he succeeded him as curate and lecturer at St. John's. At about this time it is said that the poet also was able to supplement his earnings by teaching at the fashionable school for young women run by Mrs. Dennis in Bloomsbury, and by tutoring young men

in his own home. Churchill now had two sons, and there would soon be a daughter, so it is doubtful that he made any real economic progress.

The post at St. John's necessitated frequent travel to London. Churchill was alone in Westminster during the fall of 1758, and his marital problems may have begun. At about this time he really joined in the tumultuous life of his former classmates. The satirist's extravagances caused him to live beyond his means. The scandal of bankruptcy was fortunately averted through the intercession of Lloyd's father, Churchill's former teacher. The poet had to find a means of better supporting his family, and this near disaster probably turned him to poetry to supplement his income. His decision to write was accompanied by the final separation from his wife late in 1760 or early in 1761. From this juncture neither family nor curacy was to hold his interest.

Churchill had written at least three serious poems before 1761, but he was unable to publish one until he brought out The Rosciad at his own expense on March 14, 1761. This poem deals with actors and actresses and made him famous almost overnight. The controversy about the stage and acting had a long history by 1761. What Churchill did was give the public what it wanted, a basically honest evaluation of the giants and dwarfs of the theatre of their time. After examining the more notable contemporary stage figures Churchill

selected David Garrick as the one worthy successor to the great Roman actor Roscius.

The Apology, his next poem, evolved from The Rosciad. Published in May, 1761, this work is a reply to the writer (thought to be Smollett) in the Critical Review who had attributed The Rosciad to Churchill's three friends, Lloyd, William Colman, and Bonnell Thornton. In addition to his attack on Smollett and the critics in general, Churchill also brought forth his conception of the critical and literary problems confronting the writer of his day.

Both poems were highly successful and made Churchill financially independent. He repaid the senior Lloyd for his kindness and continued to support his family, but he was never again to live with them. His poetic reputation was now firmly cemented. With no financial anxiety he was able to pursue in earnest the life of the bon vivant.

Churchill's first two poems were typical of almost everything he wrote. They elicited numerous attacks, defenses, and counterattacks among the writers of the day. Night appeared in November, 1761, and the poem constitutes Churchill's defense of rather than apology for his high living. He attempts to justify the "worthwhile" activities that he and Lloyd engage in during the early morning hours. The poem lacks his usual vituperation of individuals, and no doubt for this reason Night was not very popular.

His next poem apparently was written at a time when he needed money and knew that he could capitalize on his reputation. The Ghost is a voluminous poem that sets out to exploit the sensational Cock-Lane hoax, does so, and then goes on for many more lines. The incident merely served as a tissue for Churchill's discursive experiments.

The familiarity with John Wilkes probably began late in 1761. By July, 1762, the men were repeatedly seen about town together. This alliance was to expose Churchill to some of the famous men's clubs of the eighteenth century. He had varying contacts with both the Society of Beefsteaks, a dinner club, and the infamous Hell-Fire Club. During this time he and his fellow revelers headquartered at the Shakespeare Tavern and the Bedford Coffee-House.

It was commonplace for the eighteenth-century writer to be embroiled in politics. The influence of Wilkes greatly affected the direction and development of Churchill's poetry. He undoubtedly would have eventually satirized the flagrant political scene, but the impetus came earlier through the friendship with the militant Wilkes. Starting June 5, 1762, they collaborated with Lloyd on The North Briton, a periodical that took an anti-administration posture. The poet probably had a hand in one quarter of the issues.

The catalyst for the paper's origin was the appointment of Lord Bute as First Lord of the Treasury; George III selected the Scotsman on May 29, 1762. As anti-Scotch sentiment was high, the paper was

quite popular for its acerbity in satirizing this group. The opposing factions were soon represented by other organs that had entered the fray.

By September, 1762, Churchill's propensity for vice had led to serious consequences, as he had the symptoms of syphilis. It is remarkable that he was able to continue work on The North Briton and his poetry. Books I and II of The Ghost had been published in March, 1762, and Book III was published in September. The hoax now completely exposed, Churchill simply expanded the poem into a series of loosely related yet vivid satiric portraits.

Churchill had been working on The Prophecy of Famine at the first signs of illness. Even though he discovered the nature of his affliction in December, he still managed to bring out the poem in January. The Prophecy is an ironic pastoral on the Scottish people and the administration. The poem is full of references to key current events and was his best poem to date.

On January 4th Churchill finally resigned his affiliation with St. John's. His private life had brought him much criticism, and he had undoubtedly been reprimanded by the church authorities for his behavior; it is possible that he had in fact been confronted with a request for his resignation and not just a reprimand.

This did not still Churchill, and he and Wilkes redoubled their hedonism. Churchill continued to write rapidly in spite of the effects of his illness on his constitution. And he also had enough remaining

physical strength to participate in an increasing series of amours.

The North Briton, Number 44, appeared on April 2nd, and Bute resigned six days later. Publication of the paper was suspended pending analysis of the effect of the resignation on administration policy. The King's speech to Parliament on April 19th, announcing the Peace with France, and thereby continuing the former policy, was denounced by Wilkes in the famous North Briton, Number 45, on April 23. On the 30th Wilkes was arrested under a general warrant for insulting the King, and thus began his cause célèbre.

During April and May a number of others associated with the paper were arrested, and Wilkes was imprisoned in the Tower until May 6th. He was released on the premise that his arrest had been a breach of Parliamentary privilege. William Hogarth was now in the employment of the Crown, and he made a caricature of Wilkes during the patriot's trial. Churchill responded during June with an acrimonious attack on the artist in An Epistle to William Hogarth. In the poem Churchill selects Hogarth as a person deserving all of the ire of the satiric art. Hogarth retaliated with a caricature of Churchill that is as uncomplimentary as that of Wilkes, but the sketch is honest in the depiction of the poet's prominent features.

The two friends continued to dissipate until Wilkes removed to Paris, where he remained from July 20 to September 26. Repeated attempts to induce Churchill to join him failed, as the poet was other-

wise engaged; he was seen in public with several of the notorious demimondes of the time. In November the degradation of his character reached a climax. Churchill seduced Elizabeth Carr, the fifteen year-old daughter of a Westminster stone mason. This deed shocked even Wilkes. For a time Churchill was threatened with both legal action and physical harm by the girl's irate family but, amid universal condemnation, the lovers apparently displayed the necessary degree of remorse to placate the family. Elizabeth returned home briefly but was promptly driven back to Churchill by the persecution of an elder sister. Elizabeth and Charles first settled in a house at Richmond, near London, and later in more rural Acton Common, where they seem to have lived happily.

In November The Ghost, Book IV, and The Conference appeared. The latter poem is to some degree a public confession by Churchill of his remorse for his behavior with Miss Carr.

During November there was further debate in both the Commons and Lords concerning Wilkes. A by-product of this activity was a duel between Wilkes and Samuel Martin in which Wilkes was wounded. On December 24 Wilkes again fled to France, and he was subsequently both expelled from Commons and outlawed. The Author, which came out in the same month, deals with some of the problems of authorship.

Again Wilkes tried to convince Churchill to visit him, and again

he failed. The poet's whereabouts during the remainder of the year are difficult to determine, and this was probably due to his caustic attacks on persons in high places and the threat these posed to his well-being. His health was not improving; however, he was able to devote more time to writing, and he found time to assist Lloyd, who was in debtors' prison.

Churchill's last year was one of remarkable productivity. The Duellist was published in January. The work is an outspoken attack on Martin and other enemies of Wilkes. Gotham, Part I, came out in February and Gotham, Part II, in March. The poem is a fantasy in which the poet asserts his ideals of kingship. The Candidate, which appeared in June, is an indirect attack on the Earl of Sandwich and his candidacy for the High Stewardship of Cambridge. The Farewell came out in July. This is another satiric dialogue, and Churchill here discusses the ideals of patriotism. This is followed by Book III of Gotham in August. Both The Times and Independence appeared in September. The first poem exposed the anomalies of contemporary homosexuality, and the second poem deals with the problem of literary patronage. Two other poems were written before November, but they were not to be published until after his death. The Journey is a zestful adieu to his friends and critics, and The Dedication to the Sermons is a mock-panegyric to Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester.

Both remain unfinished. Churchill had these poems with him at the time of his death and had hoped that Wilkes could read the proofs. Although in an unfinished state, The Dedication stands as the chef d'oeuvre of Churchill's brief career.

He and his friend Humphrey Cotes set out to visit Wilkes in France during October, 1764. The poet became ill with a "military fever" on October 29, the day before they were to return. His constitution already sufficiently weakened, Churchill died at Boulogne on November 4. Cotes accompanied the body to Dover, where the poet was buried on November 10. His death, like his life, elicited a barrage of rumors and literary productions. In his will Churchill provided for both his family and Miss Carr. His brother John and Cotes were appointed as his executors, and Wilkes was asked to publish his collected works with any comments he felt appropriate.

Churchill's life was short, yet he was a highly productive poet. During the last three years he partook of all the pleasures of the town and paid the price for his indiscretion. It is remarkable that he was able to write so rapidly and with such increasing skill. Due to the scarceness of the more important details of his life it is difficult to assess his character fully. As a result, the image of his character has cast a pall over his work that has lasted up until the current century, when an examination of his true value as a poet has been zealously undertaken.

ii. A History of Churchill Criticism

Biographers of Churchill have lamented Wilkes' failure to complete the task that his friend had assigned to him on his deathbed. If he had published the poet's works many of the obscurities that surround Churchill's life and motives as they appear today would have been avoided,[2] and only Wilkes could have provided the missing commentary. Many years were to elapse before Churchill's poetry was given the necessary analytical treatment that can most accurately determine his merit as a poet. The earlier writers interested in the poet dealt almost exclusively with his life. Due to the lack of scholarly separation of fact from falsehood, the erroneous details of his life were continued and embellished.

Only in the twentieth century was detailed criticism of Churchill's poetry undertaken. Finally the critics were able to set aside the censure of his personal life in favor of evaluating his poetry objectively. These critics understood that it is the satirist's license to attack the evils of his society, even if the satirist himself is guilty in his personal life of some of the same evils he condemns in others. They realized that this apparent hypocrisy is a common frailty of man in all ages.

[2] Wilkes did publish a few observations in The New Foundling Hospital of Wit, III, (1769), 71-75, 89-105.

The few early treatments of Churchill were largely analogical in nature. Many of the eighteenth-century accounts of the poet are filled with fabrication and error to such an extent that they are of little value to those who had to work with the material later.

Shortly after Churchill's death, while his memory was still in the public mind, there appeared the anonymous Memoirs of the Reverend Mr. Charles Churchill.[3] Although this work is highly favorable to the poet, it is unfortunate that later writers relied heavily on the details related. Another anonymous work, The Genuine Memoirs of Mr. Charles Churchill (1765), is equally inaccurate but much more scurrilous than the Memoirs.[4] The Genuine Memoirs was acknowledged as false when the essay was made public. Andrew Kippis was the first to make a serious attempt at a life of Churchill. Although his sketch in Biographia Brittanica offers some helpful information about Westminster society during Churchill's lifetime, this work also repeats some of the errors of the earlier attempts.[5]

The majority of the nineteenth-century mentions of Churchill

[3] This was first published in The London Chronicle, December 6-8, 1764.

[4] One source is The Critical Review, xix, 1765, 237.

[5] iii, 1784, 565-581.

appear in anthologies where his poetry is prefaced by an introduction. There are also occasional comments in reviews of editions of his poetry and elsewhere, but none of these is a careful criticism of his work, and they did little to keep his poetry alive. As the century unfolded interest in Churchill reached its lowest level to date.

William Tooke was Churchill's first editor, but he was a lawyer rather than a literary man. His two-volume edition contained some previously unpublished information that was made available by Churchill's brother William and his publisher, William Flexney; however, there are numerous errors in detail and interpretation. Tooke later produced a second edition of the poems in three volumes, but nothing important was added.[6] What was worse, many of the earlier errors were repeated. John Forster was to viciously attack this edition.[7] He made some favorable comments about Churchill, yet little else in the way of new information about the satirist was contributed.

The editors apparently respected Forster's criticism, and an abridgment, with textual comments by Howard Spalding and a memoir by James L. Hannay, was brought out.[8] This not only repeated

[6] The Poetical Works of Charles Churchill. 2 vols. (London, 1804): 3 vols. (London, 1844).

[7] Historical and Biographical Essays (London, 1858).

[8] The Poetical Works of Charles Churchill. 2 vols. (London, 1866).

many of the earlier faults of Tooke but also omitted facts in the earlier editions that were meaningful.

The needed analysis of the poems was to come in the twentieth century. The value of the poems had to be determined by close reading and analysis, without too much emphasis being given to the pejorative criticism of Churchill's life. The rebirth of interest in Churchill during this century accompanies the growth of interest in the Augustans, including the lesser-known poets.

Much can be said about the twentieth-century contributors to Churchill biography and criticism. Not a few men have devoted years to help rescue Churchill from the oblivion toward which he had been headed. But the limitation of available space here makes it necessary to discuss only briefly the key men and their areas of investigation.

Beatty did the majority of the yeoman work on Churchill and is responsible for dispelling many of the earlier inaccuracies.[9] He completed the first good biographical sketch, made a notable analysis of the

[9]See the following by Joseph M. Beatty, Jr.: unpubl. diss. (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1917), "Charles Churchill: Satirist"; "Charles Churchill's Treatment of the Couplet," PMLA, XXXIV, N. S., No. 27 (March 1919), 60-69; "The Political Satires of Charles Churchill," SP, XVI (October 1919), 303-333; "An Essay in Critical Biography--Charles Churchill," PMLA, XXXV (June 1920), 226-246; and "Churchill's Influence on Minor Eighteenth Century Satirists," PMLA, XLII (March 1927), 162-176.

poet's use of the heroic couplet, and examined Churchill's influence.

The first edition of Churchill's poetry in the century was published by James Laver.[10] He based the edition largely upon Tooke. There are some further expansions, but the effort has proved largely inadequate. It was not until later that a definitive edition of Churchill's poetry was to be published; Grant's edition is invaluable to student and scholar alike.[11]

Churchill's participation in The North Briton is examined in depth by Nobbe.[12] Brown not only has published the only critical biography in book form to date, but he has made important contributions to the analysis of Churchill's style and his position in the critical climate of his time.[13] Weatherly furthered the investigations of Beatty and Brown. He has made additional analysis of Churchill's

[10] The Poems of Charles Churchill. 2 vols. (London, 1933).

[11] The Poetical Works of Charles Churchill, ed. Douglas Grant (London, 1956).

[12] George Nobbe, The North Briton: A Study in Political Propaganda (New York, 1939).

[13] See the following by Wallace Cable Brown: "Charles Churchill: A Revaluation," SP, XL (July 1943), 405-424; "Charles Churchill and Criticism in Transition," JEGP, XLIII (April 1944), 163-169; "Churchill's Mastery of the Heroic Couplet," JEGP, XLIV (January 1945), 12-23; and Charles Churchill--Poet, Rake, and Rebel (Lawrence, Kansas, 1953).

style, particularly Pope's influence upon the poet, and has published the only edition of the satirist's letters to Wilkes.[14] Hopkins has made some valuable examination of Churchill's satire.[15] And, finally, Winters has contributed the finest overall evaluation of the poetry.[16]

The combined efforts of this group of men during the present century should do much to enhance Churchill's position in the history of satiric literature in English. Although he may never be given a high position, he is an important satirist in the transition period between the Age of Johnson and the romantic era. His decision to choose satire as his muse no doubt had a great deal to do with his future obscurity, because few satirists have been successful in rendering their subject matter timeless.

iii. Definition of the Terms "Romanticism" and "Pre-Romanticism"

> . . . many features formerly believed to be confined to the romantic period are found also in the neo-classic, and . . . many authors definitively classified in one or the other of the hostile schools now and then displayed astonishing inclinations to desert to the enemy. Often, although one

[14] See the following by Edward H. Weatherly: "Churchill's Literary Indebtedness to Pope," SP, XLIII (January 1946), 59-69; "Charles Churchill: Neo-Classic Master," UKCR, XX, No. 4 (Summer 1954), 267; and The Correspondence of John Wilkes and Charles Churchill (New York, 1954).

[15] Kenneth Hopkins, Portraits in Satire (London, 1958).

[16] Ivor Winters, "The Poetry of Charles Churchill, Parts I and II," Poetry, XCVIII (April-May 1961), 44-53, 104-117.

> passage of an eighteenth-century poem will appear obviously romantic, another just as obviously will seem neo-classic.[17]

Literary historians have traditionally attempted to select labels for periods of time that most satisfactorily denote the dominant attitudes of the writers of the historical period. This explains the choice of the term "romantic" as descriptive of the first half of the nineteenth century in European literature.

The advocates of this method are well-intentioned, but the practice is frequently long on convenience and short on accuracy. Even a span of time as brief as a decade defies such simple classification; few if any of the writers selected at random from the period will manifest in their work all of the qualities assigned to that era. Furthermore, there will even be those artists who display characteristics that are contradictory to those considered typical.

The passage quoted at the beginning of this section helps to emphasize this seemingly paradoxical interplay of contrary tendencies during the eighteenth century. The so-called "neo-classic" period displays seeds of change that were to reach fruition in the romantic era, seeds generally considered the antithesis of those argued as "typically" neo-classical.

[17] Ernest Bernbaum, Guide through the Romantic Movement (New York, 1949), p. 8.

Like his fellow "pre-romantics," Charles Churchill's verse conveys some of the tension created by the warring impulses. He was a transitional figure, and his poetry is saturated with the mid-century evidences of the break-down of the more prominent tenets of the neo-classical canon. But this is true without the conscious knowledge of the satirist. Churchill's biographer can call the poet a "neo-classic satirist"[18] in the Dryden-Pope tradition, yet Brown is astute enough to observe further that the poet's writing is "a significant index to changes in critical standards in the 1760's."[19]

The mid-eighteenth century was not yet fertile for the complete outburst of the romantic spirit, and it is imprecise to assume unequivocally that Churchill was either a neo-classicist or an early romanticist. The truth lies at a point somewhere between the two extremes. Much work has been completed on the neo-classical elements in his writing, yet Churchill's pre-romanticism has been left relatively untouched save for a few passing observations such as the one by Brown just quoted. Consequently, this thesis will focus upon the important pre-romantic aspects of the satirist's poems. The commentary on the pre-romanticism of Churchill

[18] Wallace Cable Brown, Charles Churchill--Poet, Rake, and Rebel (Lawrence, Kansas, 1953), p. 144.

[19] "Charles Churchill and Criticism in Transition," JEGP, XLIII (April 1944), p. 163.

during this analysis will delineate features that were prevalent at mid-century and that would eventually work up toward the surface and foliate in the Romantic Movement.

Before the poetry of Charles Churchill can be looked into in depth it is necessary to undertake the difficult task of defining both "romanticism" and "pre-romanticism" as they will be visualized within the context of the ensuing discussion.

Although pre-romantic tendencies gradually supplanted neo-classic, it should be emphasized that the writers who began to display the newer qualities had no clear conception either of the qualities themselves or where they would lead. Nor did they apply the term "pre-romantic" to their efforts; this epithet was to come later from the literary scholars. While sketching the background for a definition of pre-romanticism, Bernbaum observed that

> The Romantic Movement before its coming to fullness...in the nineteenth century, was prepared for by an infinite number of intellectual and aesthetic impulses--was, in other words, an evolution and not a revolution.[20]

These "impulses" were part of the intricate but natural development of the reaction against the principles of neo-classicism. They were the "half-conscious symptoms of romanticism."[21]

[20]Ernest Bernbaum, Guide through the Romantic Movement (New York, 1949), p. 340.

[21]Hoxie Neale Fairchild, The Noble Savage: A Study in Romantic Naturalism (New York, 1928), p. 57.

"Pre-romantic" is the historical antecedent of "romantic." Even though the latter word predates the former, "pre-romantic" will be defined first:

> The term...is used to designate the development during the eighteenth century of literary tendencies which resemble, or which influenced, those of the Romantic Movement of the nineteenth century.[22]

It is apparent that the meaning of this term is dependent upon a satisfactory definition of romanticism, which is a fuller and more significant concept.

Many problems are encountered when an effort is made to delineate romanticism, and even the full-length studies of this enigmatic concept have not proved completely satisfying. As one observer has remarked:

> ...the word 'romantic' has come to mean so many things that, by itself, it means nothing. It has ceased to perform the functions of a verbal sign.[23]

Kaufman contends similarly that the term "...has come to express an increasing and bewildering number of phenomena, often of the most widely diverging and opposing categories."[24]

The dilemma is readily acknowledged by the literary historians.

[22]Bernbaum, p. 7.

[23]Arthur O. Lovejoy, "On the Discrimination of Romanticisms," PMLA, XXXIX (June 1924), p. 232.

[24]Paul Kaufman, "Defining Romanticism," MLN, XL (April 1925), p. 193.

Their reactions to it, nevertheless, vary almost as extensively as their definitions of the word. Lovejoy among others has become irritated by the general abuse of the term. As he says, the word "romanticism" has led to

> ...confusion of terminology and thought which has for a century been the scandal of literary history and criticism, and is still...copiously productive of historical errors and of dangerously undiscriminating diagnoses....[25]

This sentiment breeds caution, and it can be helpful in avoiding dogmatic statements about the meaning of romanticism.

There are also writers who believe that definition of the concept is impossible:

> I have seen many people who thought they could define Romanticism offhand; but I have never seen one who could actually do it when brought to the test.[26]

Many of the foregoing comments would tend to discourage the use of the term in any context. Despite these difficulties the term is in common usage. Because of this fact the aims of the discussion to come will best be fulfilled by using the term romanticism.

Once it has been concluded that romanticism will be utilized to describe a period of literary history, perhaps the next most important issue to be stressed is the great many divergencies in the

[25]Kaufman, p. 234.

[26]William Lyon Phelps, The Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement (Boston, 1893), p. 2.

outgrowth of the romantic impulse in each European nation. For instance, the same descriptive term is applied to a literary development in France, England, and Germany. But the character of each often has few if any common denominators with that of the others. This fact renders it essential to limit the definition to the Romantic Movement in England and to avoid any effort to arrive at a definition that would encompass the characteristics of the movement in all of Europe. In the study of Charles Churchill certain of these tendencies will be selected for detailed elaboration.

As neo-classicism began to lose support in the latter half of the eighteenth century, poets and critics alien to the tradition began to meet with a new receptiveness. The public was growing weary of the old and was ready for a refreshing change of scenery. Out of this period of gradual transition there developed a certain amount of literary and critical ambiguity, and Churchill mirrors this:

> ...as a critic Churchill was an unsystematic amateur. But his very lack of system and consistency makes him an accurate weather-vane of the times. . . . His critical ideas illustrate both these points of view.[27]

The position that Churchill epitomized was ultimately to resolve itself into the Romantic Movement. As one writer puts it,

> ...the great Romantics were to go further and deeper than

[27]Wallace Cable Brown, "Charles Churchill and Criticism in Transition," JEGP, XLIII (April 1944), p. 169.

> their predecessors...were to see more clearly their objective....[28]

The mature development was a planned revolt against some of the concepts of neo-classicism.

Even though there were several manifestations of the revolt against neo-classic concepts, some of the more significant qualities of romanticism are: 1) an emphasis on individuality, which had long been submerged, with subjectivity gradually replacing objectivity; 2) a deliberate cultivation of the language and rhythms of everyday speech rather than a continuance of lofty poetic diction; 3) experimentation in verse and meter, and the abandonment of the heroic couplet, the staple of neo-classic verse, in favor of a multitude of verse forms; 4) interest in folk literature and also themes that shock decorum; 5) the development of the romantic hero, a rebel who loved liberty and hated the restraint of authority, who reflected the attitudes and personalities of the writers themselves; and 6) the preference for nature, both as a place of retreat and a subject for literature, rather than urban life; with this came the idea that the rustic genius was superior to his counterpart trained at the university.

This short list could be expanded almost indefinitely, but it

[28]Bernbaum, p. 11.

serves as a general index to the more important changes that were to typify the romantic period. It must be stressed again that no single tendency "...can be found uniformly distributed among the great romanticists."[29]

Although all of these items are visible to varying degrees in their infancy during the pre-romantic development, only the four that appear most frequently in Churchill's poetry will be discussed. These characteristics will be examined in detail as they are reflected in his satires.

Two concepts will be treated separately even though they are often conceived by writers as elements of a single idea. These are a defiance of rules and reverence for natural genius. They will be segregated here because Churchill used each distinctively in his poetry. One writer has remarked that "Genius and originality, from the middle of the century on, were opposed to the tameness and servile imitation of the neo-classicists."[30] This opposition of genius to rules is one essence of romanticism: "...romantic art glorifies natural genius."[31] The most frequently cited example of the superi-

[29]Jacques Barzun, Romanticism and the Modern Ego (Boston, 1943), p. 12.

[30]Irving Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism (New York, 1947), p. 31.

[31]Bernard Herbert Stern, The Rise of Romantic Hellenism in English Literature, 1732-1786 (Menasha, Wisconsin, 1940), pp. 2-3.

ority of native genius to the genius developed by the schools is Shakespeare.

A third characteristic is the passionate love of liberty. This is evident in nearly all the chief romantics. Romanticism "...is associated with certain political views....People of all classes...were in a positive ferment about the idea of liberty...."[32] This romantic zeal for liberty is visible in Churchill and other pre-romantic writers.

Subjectivism is the final aspect of romanticism to be discussed in depth. This characteristic is probably the most typical, and subjectivism has traditionally been a recognized trait of the romantic writers. During the romantic era the writers were to project their very souls into their writings. This is a marked contrast to the aura of restraint that permeated neo-classical literature. There the littérateur was expected to subdue his passions and to depict the general in mankind rather than the individual traits that mark man's individuality.

These are four aspects of mature romanticism that are in their formative stages during the latter eighteenth century. They are not the only important concepts to be seen nor are they the only foreshadowings of romanticism visible in the poetry of Charles Churchill. But they are the most significant in his poems, and the selection of other

[32]T. S. Hulme, Speculations (London, 1954), p. 115.

tendencies for elaboration would cause this study to run beyond its bounds.

CHAPTER TWO

ORIGINAL GENIUS[1]

The period of revival of interest in the Greek and Roman classics known as the Renaissance arrived in England comparatively late in its development. "Humanism" accompanied the shift in emphasis from life after death to life on this earth, and probably the most significant outgrowth of this concept was the establishment of the humanistic education by a few ambitious Englishmen. The goal of such an education was the fully-rounded gentleman, and the stress was upon a disciplined study of man through the classics.

Admiration for the early products of this educational process lasted up into the eighteenth century. From the Renaissance on, the writers gaining the highest respect were nearly all university men trained in the classics. These men regarded native wildness with caution, and they felt that this quality needed to be brought within the discipline of an education that accented firmness of design and purity of style subject to proper restraint. The uneducated original genius writing in simple meter about rustics was not to become widely popular with the English critics for many years.

[1] The text utilized throughout this analysis is The Poetical Works of Charles Churchill, ed. Douglas Grant (London, 1956).

But inevitably man would reject this strict discipline. The neo-classical view of genius began to dissolve around mid-eighteenth century. As the pre-romantic impulse gathered impetus, the cult of original genius began to spring up where reverence for educated genius had been supreme.

"Nature" and "Art" became allied with the ideas about original genius and were frequently used as opposites. Native genius was true to Nature; inspired by her, this kind of genius was unsullied by knowledge of the ways of Art. Conversely, the educated genius was an imitator creating by Art. When the neo-classical critics assailed the original genius they were confronted with the seemingly great paradox of Shakespeare. Today his unique gifts are recognized, and the paradox is not as evident. But the argument that Shakespeare was an irregular genius writing from the fire of inspiration gained considerable sympathy in latter eighteenth-century aesthetics. Even the "qualified" defenses of the poet by Pope and Johnson were adopted to enhance the argument of the defenders of original genius.

The pre-romantics said that Shakespeare was the giant of English literature because his muse was freer and had not been subjected to the restraints of Art taught in the schools:

> Shakespeare appeared in the writers' verses as the free and unconfined genius disdainful of the rigors of art. Many said or

implied that he was the child of Nature. . . .[2]

Bernbaum also affirms this "exaltation of Shakespeare" as an essential tenet of pre-romanticism.[3]

Churchill attacked the advocates of outmoded tradition or current vogue. Chapter Five will treat his hatred of restraint, but he believed that original genius embodied the desired independence from the inhibiting English educational system. For Churchill,

> . . . not the learned versifiers weighed with rules and regulations, but the artless genius blessed with feeling and freedom was the poetic ideal. . . .[4]

Several works of aesthetics during the eighteenth century dealt with genius. The two most important of these set forth the key arguments favoring native genius. Joseph Addison's essay in The Spectator, No. 160,[5] ". . . was destined to be used against the very school to which it belonged."[6] This exaltation of original genius comes remarkably early in the eighteenth century and demonstrates the existence of

[2] Margaret M. Fitzgerald, First Follow Nature: Primitivism in English Poetry, 1725-1750 (New York, 1947), p. 145.

[3] Ernest Bernbaum, Guide through the Romantic Movement (New York, 1949), p. 35.

[4] Fitzgerald, p. 152.

[5] Monday, September 3, 1711 (London, 1854), Vol. II, pp. 23-26.

[6] Irving Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism (New York, 1947), p. 35.

pre-romantic dogma long before it began to proliferate after mid-century:

> Among great geniuses, those few draw the admiration of all the world upon them, and stand up as the prodigies of mankind, who, by the mere strength of natural parts, and without any assistance of art or learning, have produced works that were the delight of their own times, and the wonder of posterity. . . . The greatest genius which runs through the arts and sciences, takes a kind of tincture from them, and falls unavoidably into imitation. . . .[7]

The natural genius is superior because he does not practice the Art of the imitator, whereas the educated genius falls "unavoidably into imitation." Addison is saying that training breeds imitation rather than a true reflection of the variety of Nature. And Shakespeare is the inevitable example of the original genius: "Shakespeare was a remarkable instance of the first kind of great geniuses."[8] He is original and his educated counterparts are imitators, and ". . . an imitation of the best authors is not to compare with a good original."[9]

The second critical work of importance dealing with genius is Edward Young's Conjectures on Original Composition (1759). This work is a good yardstick to later pre-romantic aesthetics even though it has many similarities in tone and substance with Addison's essay. Each writer discusses the originals and imitators, and the sympathies of both are with the original geniuses. Young comments on servile

[7] Addison, p. 23.

[8] p. 24.

[9] Ibid., p. 25.

allegiance to the ancients:

> Too great an awe for them lays genius under restraint, and denies it...free scope....Genius is a master-workman, learning is but an instrument; and an instrument, though most valuable, yet not always indispensible....Have not some...so written as almost to persuade us that they shone brighter and soared higher for escaping the boasted aid of the proud ally learning?[10]

Learning can be helpful but is not always necessary. Shakespeare is again the example of one who has written better without the "boasted aid" of learning; here is an original genius of unquestionable greatness who had no formal classical training. Young's expansion of this idea is an indictment of the schools: "...who knows whether Shakespeare might have thought less, if he had read more?"[11] The bard wrote from his empirical knowledge of Nature and man, and he would not have created original works of art if he had been trained by the schools. His native genius fortunately avoided the snares of imitation.

Later eighteenth-century writers supported the ideas of Addison and Young on genius, and enthusiasm for these concepts culminated with the romantics. The idea of an uneducated genius writing great literature stimulated the romantic imagination. A final summary of the entire development counter to neo-classicism will suffice here:

> As the aesthetic battleground shifted...'genius' and the 'rules' became the watchwords of the opposing factions. The familiar

[10] Henry C. Shelley, The Life and Letters of Edward Young (Boston, 1914), p. 251.

[11] Ibid.

> conflict between regularity and irregularity...fired...disputes over literary genius. Since the bitterest battles of the critics raged around Shakespeare's head, and since the defenders of literary freedom talked of his wildly irregular genius in terms of the profusion of Nature itself, poetic tributes...offer a useful transition between the two branches of the aesthetic argument.[12]

Churchill followed the lead of the pre-romantics in his concept of genius. The tension of neo-classic and pre-romantic dogma in his poetry is in part a sign of the times and in part a clue to the poet's inner being. Like other writers of his day his poems are highly self-revealing. Beneath the surface confidence and strength Churchill tried to project there is evidence of a troubled personality. One manifestation of this apparent psychological disturbance has to do with original genius. In reality Churchill did not have a background that would place him with the original geniuses; he did receive a thorough classical education. But the poet at times envisioned himself as such a genius because of his failure to complete a university education, and his unrelenting attacks on the schools suggest an inferiority complex caused by his failure. In any event, he was to defend original genius throughout his poetry. And his defenses are often allied to his basic insecurity.

Independence was the last poem to appear before his death. This typifies Churchill's consistent position on genius:

[12] Fitzgerald, p. 142.

> The real Bard, whom native Genius fires,
> Whom ev'ry Maid of Castaly inspires,
> Let him consider wherefore he was meant,
> Let him but answer Nature's great intent,
> And fairly weigh himself with other men,
> Would ne'er debase the glories of his pen,
> Would in full state, like a true Monarch, live,
> Nor bate one inch of his Prerogative. (297-304)

True poetic genius is inspired by Nature, and the poet must submit to the intentions of Nature or debase his pen in imitation. If the poet strays from these dictates he goes beyond his true prerogative and is comparable to a false monarch.

"An Epistle to R. L. L." was written early but was not published until after Churchill's death. Addressed to Lloyd, it expresses in capsule form many of his pre-romantic ideas and, more particularly, the poet's viewpoint with reference to original genius.

This poem is one of many during the eighteenth century that treat the ancients-versus-moderns controversy. Churchill initiates the poem with an explanation of why so few modern poets will gain fame:

> NO happy aera e're was known,
> So full of writers, as our own;
> While few can boast a lawful claim,
> To present, or to future fame.
> .....
> But have as poets, no pretence,
> Unless they set the stamp of sense.
> The clinquant ring of tinsel sound,
> Unto the ear is pleasing found;
> But sense gives value to the whole,
> Rhime is the body, sense the soul. (1-4, 7-12)

To become great a writer must possess "sense," which means thought or intellectual content. There will always be poets who are able to write smooth (regular) verse, but this alone does not insure merit; poetry that is merely pleasing to the ear is often of little value in conveying the poet's "soul." Yet even sense is a subordinate part of successful poetry:

> Nor yet can ev'ry wight of sense,
> A poet instantly commence.
> 'Tis not a long dull train of thought,
> Into smooth numbers coldly wrought,
> Can give a title to that name,
> Which few deserve, but many claim.
> No, there is something more required,
> Bards, to be bards, must be inspired.
> The man, who truly loves and wooes
> The favour of the heav'n-born muse,
> Must from her fury catch the flame,
> And in his bosom feel the same:
> That spark, which as the ancients say,
> To animate the new-made clay,
> PROMETHEUS stole, must fill his breast,
> And blaze with warmth divine confest. (13-28)

Churchill was thinking of Pope in lines 15 and 16. The efficient versifier who comes close to writing with sense is still not insured greatness, because the most important ingredient of the poet can come to only a few. The immortals of poetry were "inspired" to create great works, and failure to reach these heights comes from the inability to wed sense and inspiration. Inspiration is the divinely given poetic "fury" that takes the poet outside of time and place, and sense is the human element that is much easier to possess.

To Churchill the modern poets are failures because they are overmastered by the impulse to imitate the ancients:

> The sons of GREECE and ROME thus fir'd,
> Urg'd on their way, to fame aspir'd;
> Their course with noble ardour run,
> And wore the laurels which they won.
> Thus fir'd, the sons of Britain feel
> An equal, or a greater zeal;
> The flying prize as ardent press
> With more desert, but less success.
> Envy our judgment leads astray,
> And prejudices bar their way.... (35-44)

"Envy" and "prejudices" stand in the way of current greatness in English poetry. Envy of the classical poets has led poets to set down the rules of the ancients and to slavishly imitate them; and imitation is an inferior art. This error in judgment has led to the incorrect evaluation of Shakespeare's original genius:

> Else why are critick herds misled
> To tear the crown from SHAKESPEARE's head,
> Which they would only have to grow
> And bloom on an ATHENIAN brow.
> SHAKESPEARE! A Modern!... (45-49)

All poets of any time are only men, and Shakespeare is no less worthy of praise than the classical poets. This defense of Shakespeare, which was to characterize the pre-romantic argument, marks a return of English nationalism. Churchill and others were tired of hearing unquestioning lip service paid to the ancients. By her own standards, and not those of antiquity, England's own poets were not inferior; and this entire revolt marks a return of native pride. What merit in universal

terms makes the ancients greater than Britain's best poets?

> Moderns, my learned sir, are men;
> And when you've set forth all your store,
> What were the mighty ancients more?
> What great enchantment's in the sound
> Of ROME or ATHENS to be found,
> That they unto themselves should claim
> This great monopoly of fame?
> What is their plea, and, fairly try 'em,
> Wherefore is HOMER more than I am?
> Not because fate it chanc'd to please,
> That HOMER should be born in GREECE;
> His merit would have been as great
> If born in any other state.... (50-62)

Genius is the same in all ages and places and results from the possession of sense and inspiration combined. Only the names would be different: "Homer would have been Homer still" (76) no matter when he wrote. Fate made him a Grecian.

The remaining portion of the poem contains no further discussion of genius. Churchill has spoken of what makes poetic genius universally great, and the ingredients are fresh intellectual content (sense or soul) joined with poetic fire (inspiration). The poet is given the latter quality and cannot acquire it. Shakespeare, the irregular genius, has the gift and therefore does not need to waste his efforts imitating earlier writers to achieve greatness. He is the peer of the immortals of all time and yet is an original genius writing with the fire of inspiration.

The Rosciad remains Churchill's most famous work. As in "An Epistle to R. L. L." the satirist is concerned with the ancient

and modern controversy, but in this poem the emphasis is on acting rather than poetry. Churchill again scoffs at convention and defends modern acting against the more formal Roman style. The modern style of acting is less affected and more natural, and the poet uses David Garrick as the supreme representative of the modern school.

Churchill satirizes the current slavish obedience to ancient tenets of acting. He gives Lloyd an extended apostrophe to genius which obviously expresses Churchill's views on the subject. Lloyd admits respect but not envy for the classical writers. He sees in his own age equal potential, and the speech on the universality of genius closely parallels the position taken by Churchill in "An Epistle":

> 'But more than just to other countries grown,
> 'Must we turn base apostates to our own?
> 'Where do these words of Greece and Rome excel,
> 'That England may not please the ear as well?
> 'What mighty magic's in the place or air,
> 'That all perfection needs must center there?
> 'In states, let strangers blindly be preferr'd;
> 'In state of letters, Merit should be heard.
> 'Genius is of no country, her pure ray
> 'Spreads all abroad, as gen'ral as the day:
> 'Foe to restraint, from place to place she flies,
> 'And may hereafter e'en in Holland rise.
> 'May not, to give a pleasing fancy scope,
> 'And chear a patriot heart with patriot hope;
> 'May not some great extensive genius raise
> 'The name of Britain 'bove Athenian praise;
> 'And, whilst brave thirst of fame his bosom warms,
> 'Make England great in Letters as in Arms?
> 'There may--there hath--and SHAKESPEAR's muse aspires
> 'Beyond the reach of Greece; with native fires
> 'Mounting aloft, he wings his daring flight,

'Whilst SOPHOCLES below stands trembling at his height.
'Why should we then abroad for judges roam,
'When abler judges we may find at home?
'Happy in tragic and in comic pow'rs,
'Have we not SHAKESPEAR?--Is not [JONSON] ours?
'For them, your nat'ral judges, Britons, vote;
'They'll judge like Britons, who like Britons wrote?
(199-226)

This passage operates as a charge to the poets of England to trust in their own native genius and to leave off slavish imitation. Genius depends on the man and not his position in time and space. Again Shakespeare is the exemplar of original English genius. Churchill does go further in his nationalistic argument than formerly. He states that Shakespeare's greatness has successfully raised the fame of British letters above that of Greece. Even mighty Sophocles stands trembling below as he views the heights of Parnassus that Shakespeare has reached. And, to the delight of the pre-romantics, the poet is an original genius writing "with native fires" of inspiration.

Churchill selects Ben Jonson as Shakespeare's counterpart in English criticism. These giants of tragic and comic theatre have been selected both because of their clear dominance in letters during their day and for purposes of contrast. This contrast enables Churchill to convey his notions about the superiority of original genius. Jonson and Shakespeare represent the rival factions discussed by Addison and Young. Shakespeare is the champion of the pre-romantic camp, and is discussed first:

> In the first seat, in robe of various dyes,
> A noble wildness flashing from his eyes,
> Sat SHAKESPEAR.--In one hand a wand he bore,
> For mighty wonders fam'd in days of yore;
> The other held a globe, which to his will
> Obedient turn'd, and own'd the master's skill:
> Things of the noblest kind his genius drew,
> And look'd through Nature at a single view:
> A loose he gave to his unbounded soul,
> And taught new lands to rise, new seas to roll;
> Call'd into being scenes unknown before,
> And, passing Nature's bounds, was something more.
> (259-270)

In this brief characterization the satirist utilizes the wand and the globe for symbolic purposes. The wand is traditionally the instrument of the magician's art and calls to mind secret and esoteric associations. The wand of magic is here allied with Shakespeare's creative imagination by which he is able to create situations and characters of a magical nature. Shakespeare, like the magician, uses the wand, which is his creative imagination, to look "through Nature at a single glance." This mystical power enables him to understand secrets of Nature known only to a select few. The globe symbolizes Shakespeare's command over all of Nature, and this is allied with the magical powers represented by the wand. The great bard's intellect enables him to control the depiction of the magical creations of his imagination. The wand is the "sense" and the globe the "inspiration" seen in "An Epistle to R. L. L." Shakespeare is pictured as the typical original genius as conceived by the pre-romantic writers. He has "a noble wildness flashing from his eyes," and the neo-classic critic certainly

would not have considered such unrestrained wildness as noble. Shakespeare's "unbounded soul" further implies a lack of restraint and an emotional fervor that was gradually to become the accepted replacement for the more rigid tenets of neo-classicism. This great original genius, fired by the inspiration of Nature, even succeeded in going beyond the bounds of his natural education.

The stanza dealing with Jonson is a significant contrast to the one just discussed on Shakespeare. Churchill praises merits in Jonson that not only are contrary to those admired in Shakespeare but are inferior in the satirist's view:

> Next [JONSON] sat, in antient learning train'd,
> His rigid judgment Fancy's flights restrain'd,
> Correctly prun'd each wild luxuriant thought,
> Mark'd out her course, nor spar'd a glorious fault.
> The book of man he read with nicest art,
> And ransack'd all the secrets of the heart;
> Exerted Penetration's utmost force,
> And trac'd each passion to its proper source,
> Then, strongly mark'd, in liveliest colours drew,
> And brought each foible forth to public view.
> The coxcomb felt a lash in ev'ry word,
> And fools hung out, their brother fool's deterr'd.
> His comic humour kept the world in awe,
> And Laughter frighten'd Folly more than Law. (271-284)[14]

[14] In earlier editions, and in Brown's biography, the spelling in line 271 and line 224, already quoted, is "Jonson." Grant's addition of an "h" is not annotated but is apparently incorrect. Churchill rejected Johnson as a possible judge in lines 61 and 62 and, in addition, it was Jonson who wrote satirical comedies to correct manners through exposure of follies. Any question that the reference is to Jonson is resolved in the final two lines of this passage where "Folly" is exposed through "comic humour" and "Laughter."

Churchill praises Jonson for his learning, satirical ability, "correctness," and knowledge of human nature. Correctness here means purity of style and design. But underlying this praise is a tone of disapproval. The diction conveys Churchill's attitude toward Jonson's genius. Such words as "rigid," "restrain'd," "prun'd," "art," "ransack'd," "Penetration," and "proper" all carry unfavorable connotations. Jonson was not an inspired writer. Unlike Shakespeare there are no imaginative flights of "Fancy" in his work. Jonson intentionally restrained any inclination in his nature toward Fancy, and he opposed extravagance and fancifulness. His classical training led him to stress moderation and control rather than emotion and imagination. As with Addison and Young, Churchill is using this opportunity to contrast the superiority of original genius with the genius of Art.

The Author is largely a discussion of the satirist and his art. Churchill quickly establishes the opposition of original and educated genius. "Art," "Learning," and "Taste" are the tools of the educated genius. There follows probably his most severe indictment of education, and in stanza two Churchill equates education with a misspent youth. One achieves Learning only to find that his fellows are the ignorant rather than the learned. Only the ignorant succeed in this life, and they do so through "Preferment." This hypothesis is expanded in the third stanza:

O'er crabbed authors life's gay prime to waste,
To cramp wild genius in the chains of taste,
To bear the slavish drudgery of schools,
And tamely stoop to ev'ry pedant's rules,
For seven long years debarr'd of lib'ral ease,
To plod in college trammels to degrees,
Beneath the weight of solemn toys to groan,
Sleep over books, and leave mankind unknown,
To praise each senior blockhead's thread-bare tale,
And laugh till reason blush, and spirits fail,
Manhood with vile submission to disgrace,
And cap the fool, whose merit is his Place.... (13-24)

In this quotation "degrees" and "caps" symbolize the academic life against which Churchill wages his personal war. This atmosphere of learning imbues the student with "taste" and "rules" which do him much harm. These ruin the natural instincts of youth. The student should have leisure to study the book of Nature, for what good is a degree when one needs only social position to obtain one? To learn one must put off the false trappings of the schools and use his time to advantage away from the classroom.

One further illustration of Churchill's conception of original genius will be cited. The Apology expands several of the critical ideas of The Rosciad. The poet's fondness for making his point by contrast is seen again, and in this poem Pope and Dryden are selected. Dryden is Churchill's acknowledged master, and he comments later on his reasons for preferring the Restoration poet to Pope. The strong and weak points of Pope are examined first:

IN polish'd numbers, and majestic sound,
Where shall thy rival, POPE, be ever found?

> But whilst each line with equal beauty flows,
> E'en excellence, unvary'd, tedious grows.
> Nature, thro' all her works, in great degree,
> Borrows a blessing from VARIETY.
> Music itself her needful aid requires
> To rouze the soul, and wake our dying fires.
> Still in one key, the Nightingale would teize:
> Still in one key, not BRENT would always please. (366-375)

The portrait of Pope here, like that of Jonson in The Rosciad, is evidence of the basic fairness of Churchill's criticism. He was to stress frequently the inability of contemporary critics to examine the merits as well as the faults of their subjects, and he consistently strives for the objective approach in his own literary criticism.

Pope is praised here for his mastery of the "polished," epigrammatic poetic line. But even though his "majestic sound" is unsurpassed, Pope's poetry is "tedious" due to a noticeable absence of variety. For Churchill Pope is typical of the learned genius of the mature neo-classical period.

Rarely if ever is Dryden discussed as an original genius within the pre-romantic meaning of the term. But Churchill and Dryden have similarities within the satiric tradition, and it has been mentioned that Churchill at times regarded himself as a native genius. His selection of Dryden as such a genius is therefore understandable. Churchill admired the poet for his variety and wealth of "invention":

> HERE let me bend, great DRYDEN, at thy shrine,
> Thou dearest name to all the tuneful nine.
> What if some dull lines in cold order creep,
> And with his theme the poet seems to sleep?
> Still when his subject rises proud to view,

> With equal strength the poet rises too.
> With strong invention, noblest vigour fraught,
> Thought still springs up and rises out of thought;
> Numbers, ennobling numbers in their course,
> In varied sweetness flow, in varied force;
> The pow'rs of Genius and of Judgment join,
> And the Whole Art of Poetry is Thine. (376-387)

Churchill's honesty will not let him overlook the fact that Dryden was often dull. Yet Dryden's poetry is varied, and his poetic "strength" helps him to rise to the occasion when the subject required a strong rendering. At his varied and inventive best Dryden fulfills the pre-romantic ideal of irregularity. The educated genius supported by the neo-classic aesthetic, conversely, was restrained and regular. The final two lines of the stanza express the concepts seen in "An Epistle to R. L. L." Dryden has mastered the "Art of Poetry" because he has successfully joined the "pow'rs of Genius and of Judgment." The power of Judgment is the sense and Genius the poetic fire of inspiration of the earlier poem. Dryden's mastery results from the successful wedding of these two necessary ingredients in his poetry. And this is the accomplishment reserved only for original geniuses.

Churchill's views on original genius are expressed in many of his poems. In all instances he is in accord with the latter eighteenth-century aesthetics of the pre-romanticists. What Addison had first expressed during the neo-classical era was to gather rapid support until, by the time of Young, wild genius was defended in several

critical works.

Churchill's failure to earn a university degree is allied with his conceptions of genius. He certainly did not have the background that would lead him to assume the wild genius pose in his own life, but the satirist was often to think of himself in such terms. Man must have his beautiful illusions and Churchill, along with many of the pre-romantics, was guilty of constructing such ideas about native genius.

CHAPTER THREE

SUBJECTIVITY

...Self--that darling, luscious theme.[1]

The neo-classicists had fostered the objective impulse, and the success of the Romantic Movement ushered in subjectivity. This ultimate triumph of the "self" came gradually through the eighteenth-century pre-romantic development in poetry; slowly man started to revel in the uniqueness of his personality. Rousseau's Confessions, which stressed the individuality of each person, was influential in Europe. Literature was soon to take on an introspective character, and the personal pronoun "I" came into more general use.

Mention was made in Chapter Two of the subjective quality of Charles Churchill's poems. There is visible beneath the surface Epicureanism of the poems a distraught personality trying to correct and justify itself. Many of the mistakes of this life could not be resisted by the poet, and his guilt was to manifest itself frequently because of his unacceptable behavior. These various realizations of his errors aid in giving some clues to the nature of his psychological disturbance. Churchill's levity led to unavoidable pangs of remorse

[1]The Candidate, l. 117.

that he could repress only some of the time; several examples of the internal turmoil overmastering the satirist appear in the poetry. Both his hedonistic pursuits and his position as a satirist of mankind joined to isolate him from the mainstream of society. Although Churchill craved for sincere recognition of his talents and, on an unconscious level, to "belong," he was irrevocably cut off from hope of satisfaction. These factors were in part responsible for his psychological weaknesses as seen in his poems.

One of Churchill's favorite subjects was himself, and he makes an admission of this fact in the short quotation at the outset of Chapter Three. Despite the high degree of subjectivity in his poetry, he still maintained the same degree of integrity as when he vilified his enemies. Several commentators have made note of this loyalty to truth in his analyses of his personality and motivations:

> ...in his poetry he frequently becomes introspective in the most approved romantic manner, discoursing frankly on his faults with really surprising insight.[2]

The detailed analysis of his individual nature is typically romantic, but rarely is such insight into one's weaknesses accomplished. This quality evoked, during a discussion of Gotham, a similarly perceptive observation from another Churchill critic:

[2]George Nobbe, The North Briton: A Study of Political Propaganda (New York, 1939), p. 60.

> I see in his poems a great deal of spontaneous confession, and, accordingly, am inclined to accept frankly even the picture of himself as a youthful enthusiast, a romantic....[3]

Reference to one further recognition of this pre-romantic subjectivism in his poetry is sufficient:

> ...and like the Romanticists of a later date, he had within him ...a kind of half-serious individualism which culminates...in an apology of free living....[4]

This statement is of value because it introduces the "half serious" quality of some of his introspection; not infrequently Churchill achieved a comic-pathetic quality in these personal flourishes.

Night, even though probably his most subjective poem overall, presents a number of interpretive difficulties. The tone of this work is not lighthearted like many of Churchill's other poems. In addition, his usual habit of addressing the reader directly when talking about himself is largely absent as he chooses to remain behind the satiric mask. The disclosure of his real feelings is buried beneath this convention, and the reader must read the poem closely to glean his true emotions.

In addition to covertly laying bare his emotional problems, and the attendant frustration and mental distress, Churchill creates a pinnacle of superiority for himself and Lloyd from which they can con-

[3]Edmund Blunden, Votive Tablets: Studies Chiefly Appreciative of English Authors and Books (London, 1931), p. 139.

[4]Louis Cazamian, A History of English Literature, Vol. II (New York, 1927), p. 185.

demn the society surrounding them. The worth of those who have attacked the poet for his various indiscretions is depreciated in an effort to bolster his failing ego.

Churchill was traduced for his actions by friend and foe alike, and these criticisms threatened his sense of balance. His mind, as he reacts subjectively to his problems, functions as the chief reference point in Night. The poet's psychological difficulties appear, and his personality provides the unifying structure of the poem. As he reminisces with Lloyd he is slowly able to regain his equilibrium. The poem follows the various manifestations of his guiltiness, and ultimately he both completes his pose of superiority and regains his composure simultaneously.

In the opening stanza, as Churchill begins to construct the myth of his nighttime world, his mental disturbance is clearly visible:

> WHEN foes insult, and prudent friends dispense,
> In pity's strains, the worst of insolence,
> Oft with thee, LLOYD, I steal an hour from grief,
> And in thy social converse find relief.
> The mind, of solitude impatient grown,
> Loves any sorrows rather than her own. (1-6)

This passage tells much about Churchill at the time he wrote Night. Some of his friends have apparently joined his opponents in chastising him for his behavior, and he calls them "prudent" for doing so. Furthermore, the poet admits that he is often grieved by this criticism and that the conversations with Lloyd give "relief." His "solitude" and isolation from society cause him "sorrows." Churchill had to

strike back, and the only way he felt he could do this was to react aggressively toward his enemies from the satiric pose of righteous preeminence:

> LET slaves to business, bodies without soul,
> Important blanks in Nature's mighty roll,
> Solemnize nonsense in the day's broad glare,
> We NIGHT prefer, which heals or hides our care. (7-10)

The bitterness he directs at the representatives of the daytime world is related to his contempt for the university life. The products of the university, and their concern with Art, and the other men of the day, who are interested in amassing "Gold" (12), are both guilty of loyalty to false idols. Churchill argues, even though his nighttime activities are condemned, that night is a positive time of superiority to the evils and false values harbored during the day. Night "heals" his admitted "care."

He continues to expand upon the nighttime-superiority daytime-inferiority contrast. The representatives of the day are hypocritical, and at least Churchill is honest enough to admit his sinfulness. One vice, a willing capacity for liquor, aids him much like conversation in easing his troubles:

> THEN in Oblivion's grateful cup I drown
> The galling sneer, the supercilious frown,
> The strange reserve, the proud affected state
> Of upstart knaves grown rich and fools grown great. (85-88)

Seen here are both contempt for his social superiors and the harm the opinions of the powerful and rich do to his need for recognition. With

drink he finds temporary solace.

Later in Night Churchill discusses his early school days at Westminster with Lloyd and his other friends:

> WHETHER those classic regions are survey'd
> Where we in earliest youth together stray'd,
> Where hand in hand we trod the flow'ry shore,
> Tho' now thy happier genius runs before,
> When we conspir'd a thankless wretch to raise,
> And taught a stump to shoot with pilfer'd praise,
> Who once for Rev'rend merit famous grown
> Gratefully strove to kick his MAKER down.... (95-102)

Of course this admission of classical training belies Churchill's affectation of uneducated genius. These lines are somewhat artificial as he criticizes the ingratitude of his former classmate Sellon. He and Lloyd had helped him through school only to see him turn his back on them. To Churchill he was an equal whom, along with his social betters, he resented for being sickened by the poet's public excesses.

At this juncture the conversation is having a salutary effect on Charles: "A gainer still thy friend himself must find, / His grief suspended, and improv'd his mind" (111-112). The improvement of his distress has paralleled the buildup of the night-superiority imagery. Only night can allow a clear vision of reality, and this reality is the manipulated world the poet has created.

Churchill hated those sycophants who sought favor among the powerful, and he gives subjective utterance to his contempt for the weakness of flattery. He loves earthly pleasure but is still committed to the satirist's duty to expose vice and folly:

FOE to restraint, unpractis'd in deceit,
Too resolute, from Nature's active heat,
To brook affronts, and tamely pass them by;
Too proud to flatter, too sincere to lie,
Too plain to please, too honest to be great;
Give me, kind Heaven, an humbler, happier state:
Far from the place where men with pride deceive,
Where rascals promise, and where fools believe;
Far from the walk of folly, vice and strife,
. . . . . .
Content shall place us far above them all. (179-187, 194)

This passage is more believable than the preceding one. Churchill is asserting that his merit is above that of the courtier. He is too proud and honest to fall subject to courtly follies, such as flattery, and this knowledge makes him temporarily content. In line 183 he admits his inability to please the critics. This failure to gain the desired prominence as a poet prevents him from maintaining a level of serenity in his personality.

Further realization of his isolation, as he tries to expand the image of his superiority, is seen at the beginning of the next stanza: "SPECTATORS only on this bustling stage, / We see what vain designs mankind engage" (195-196). Mankind may indeed engage in "vain designs," but Churchill elicits the impression here that he is actually an unwilling spectator to the bustle of accepted behavior around him.

Being finished with the courtiers, the satirist next attempts to establish his dominance over the participants in the political sideshow:

PEACE to such triflers, be our happier plan
To pass thro' life as easy as we can.

> Who's in or out, who moves this grand machine,
> Nor stirs my curiosity nor spleen.
> Secrets of state no more I wish to know
> Than secret movements of a PUPPET-SHEW....(255-260)

This feigned lack of concern is of course not consistent with the truth; both Churchill and Lloyd were actively involved in the political conflict, and their views were expressed in The North Briton. This is again simply part of the satiric pose. In the following stanza he states that even politics cannot disturb the contentment of his and Lloyd's leisure, but this really is a mélange of wishful thinking and affectation:

> Exempt we sit, by no rude cares oppress,
> And, having little, are with little blest.
> All real ills in dark oblivion lye,
> And joys, by fancy form'd, their place supply,
> NIGHT's laughing hours unheeded slip away,
> Nor one dull thought foretells approach of Day. (281-286)

Once more Churchill stresses that the camaraderie of night protects him from the annoyance of his errors. But this does not mean that he is fully relieved. Both the reality of his situation and the aloofness of his pose in the poem isolate him irrevocably from society, and the 'laughing hours'of the evening are simply further manifestations of his need to forget his loneliness:

> THUS have we liv'd, and whilst the fates afford
> Plain Plenty to supply the frugal board,
> Whilst MIRTH, with DECENCY his lovely bride,
> And Wine's gay GOD, with TEMP'RANCE by his side,
> Their welcome visit pay; whilst HEALTH attends
> The narrow circle of our chosen Friends,
> Whilst frank GOOD-HUMOUR consecrates the treat,
> And -- -- makes society complete,
> Thus WILL we live, tho' in our teeth are hurl'd

Those Hackney Strumpets, PRUDENCE and the WORLD. (287-296)

Churchill has again returned to "prudence" as the characteristic quality of his collective enemy, the "world." He is arguing that the Epicurean pursuits with his friends, during the evening hours, are superior exercises to those of the day.

The final stanza of Night affords a recapitulation of the isolation the poet was destined to suffer throughout his short life. Both the pose of the satirist and the reality of his position set him apart:

> STEDFAST and true to virtue's sacred laws,
> Unmov'd by vulgar censure or applause,
> Let the WORLD talk, my Friend; that WORLD, we know,
> Which calls us guilty, cannot make us so.
> Unaw'd by numbers, follow Nature's plan,
> Assert the rights, or quit the name of man.
> Consider well, weigh strictly right and wrong;
> Resolve not quick, but once resolv'd be strong.
> In spite of Dullness, and in spite of Wit,
> If to thyself thou canst thyself acquit,
> Rather stand up assur'd with conscious pride
> Alone, than err with millions on thy side. (371-382)

Churchill has tried desperately throughout this poem to assert convincingly that his unique way of living rendered his circle of friends superior to the rest of the world. In doing this he has assumed to some extent the conventional satiric pose of the guiltless man fighting against inaccurate accusations about his character. Although this was all meant to appear very noble it really is flatly ineffectual. Underneath the veneer of righteousness Churchill's disturbed personality unconsciously affords glimpses of his reaction to criticism of his life. It is

not so much that he is out of character attacking false appearances, because he does this often in his poems. But the entire method of development here is dependent upon the establishment of a believable position for himself and his friends, and the attempt fails badly. Churchill was at his poorest in such instances. He is considerably more effective, and also more typical, when his overt subjectivism leaves no doubt that it is the satirist himself who is disclosing his problems directly and often painfully to the reader. In these instances he honestly discusses his feelings and the motivations for his actions. He realizes his behavior is abnormal and endeavors to understand the recurring pangs of remorse issuing from his conscience.

The Dedication of the Sermons contains a straightforward discussion of Churchill's ineptitude as a priest, and the poem gives a good example of his more typical subjective candor:

> Much did I wish, e'en whilst I kept those sheep,
> Which, for my curse, I was ordain'd to keep;
> Ordain'd, alas! to keep thro' need, not choice,
> Those sheep which never heard their shepherd's voice,
> Which did not know, yet would not learn their way,
> Which stray'd themselves, yet griev'd that I should stray,
> Those sheep, which my good Father (on his bier
> Let filial duty drop the pious tear)
> Kept well, yet starv'd himself, e'en at that time,
> Whilst I was pure, and innocent of rime,
> Whilst, sacred Dulness ever in my view,
> Sleep at my bidding crept from pew to pew.... (73-84)

This account is both humorous and pathetic at once. Churchill chose the ministry through necessity. He was unfit to live the poor shep-

herd's life as his father had successfully done, and his parishioners did not accept a pastor guilty of the same defects they had. Even though poetry was not yet a concern which took time from his religious duties, the best he could do in the pulpit was lull his listless flock to sleep with uninspiring and dull sermons. There is no question that Churchill's failure as a priest, which led to his ultimate resignation, had a lasting psychological effect. The fact that he felt compelled to justify his position demonstrates his guilt for his failure. And this was no doubt magnified because both his brother and father were successful pastors.

Another reference to his pastoral inadequacies is seen in The Author. Churchill had here been attacking another ill-suited clergyman, and he suddenly realized that his argument would not have the proper weight unless he qualified his own past conduct:

> Bred to the Church, and for the gown decreed,
> 'Ere it was known that I should learn to read;
> Tho' that was nothing, for my Friends, who knew
> What mighty Dullness of itself could do,
> Never design'd me for a working Priest,
> But hop'd, I should have been a DEAN at least;
> Condemn'd (like many more, and worthier men,
> To whom I pledge the service of my pen),
> Condemn'd (whilst proud, and pamper'd Sons of Lawn,
> Cramm'd to the throat, in lazy plenty yawn)
> In pomp of rev'rend begg'ry to appear,
> To pray, and starve on forty pounds a year;
> My Friends, who never felt the galling load,
> Lament that I forsook the Packhorse road,
> Whilst Virtue to my conduct witness bears
> In throwing off that gown, which FRANCIS wears. (341-356)

The satirist argues, as in The Dedication, that he did not choose the ministry. His friends are unable to understand his motives for leaving the priesthood, and he argues that even in the church the sons of the rich prosper while the sons of the poor starve. Poetry is the only employment that does not depend on rank, and his fierce resentment of the upper classes erupts again. Churchill's lifelong bitterness toward the corruptions of social rank certainly made him fitted by temperament to be a satirist. The frustrations of his modest station caused him to react aggressively toward his social 'betters."

Churchill was fond of creating self-portraits in his poems. Even though these involve a certain amount of the usual playful distortion, the poet demonstrated that he did have considerable sensitivity to his far from engaging countenance. He initiated the asides on his ugliness in The Rosciad:

> E'en I, whom Nature cast in hideous mould,
> Whom having made she trembled to behold,
> Beneath the load of mimicry may groan,
> And find, that Nature's errors are my own. (405-408)

He may joke about his appearance, but his comments hint that his homeliness gave him no little pain and anxiety. Even though he feigned indifference to public criticism he was a sensitive person, and the broadsides on his appearance were difficult to withstand.

Hogarth caricatured the poet as a drunken bear soon after Churchill had issued his bitter attack on the artist in An Epistle to William

Hogarth. Although several satirists before Churchill's time, including Pope, had spoken candidly of their physical grotesqueries, his self-portrait in Independence is one of the most unflattering ever written. Churchill has just described the features of Lord Lyttelton, an enemy of Wilkes, when a personified Reason steps forward to describe the poet:

> . . . the Second was a man,
> Whom Nature built on quite a diff'rent plan;
> A Bear, whom from the moment he was born,
> His Dam despis'd, and left unlick'd in scorn;
> A Babel, which, the pow'r of Art outdone,
> She could not finish when She had begun;
> An utter Chaos, out of which no might
> But that of God could strike one spark of light.
>
> Broad were his shoulders, and from blade to blade
> A H---- might at full length have laid;
> Vast were his Bones, his Muscles twisted strong,
> His Face was short, but broader than 'twas long,
> His Features, tho' by Nature they were large,
> Contentment had contriv'd to overcharge
> And bury meaning, save that we might spy
> Sense low'ring on the penthouse of his eye;
> His Arms were two twin Oaks, his Legs so stout
> That they might bear a Mansion House about,
> Nor were They, look but at his body there,
> Design'd by Fate a much less weight to bear.
>
> O'er a brown Cassock, which had once been black,
> Which hung in tatters on his brawny back,
> A sight most strange, and awkward to behold
> He threw a covering of Blue and Gold.
> Just at that time of life, when Man by rule,
> The Fop laid down, takes up the graver fool,
> He started up a Fop, and, fond of show,
> Look'd like another HERCULES, turn'd Beau.
> A Subject, met with only now and then,
> Much fitter for the pencil than the pen;

HOGARTH would draw him (Envy must allow)
E'en to the life, was HOGARTH living now.

With such accoutrements, with such a form,
Much like a Porpoise just before a storm,
Onward He roll'd; a laugh prevail'd around,
E'en Jove was seen to simper; at the sound
(Nor was the cause unknown, for from his Youth
Himself he studied by the glass of Truth)
He join'd their mirth, nor shall the Gods condemn
If, whilst They laugh'd at him, he laugh'd at them. (147-186)

Here Churchill has given a detailed portrait of his features and lurid habits of dress. Even though he chooses to jest about his appearance, underlying this is a vein of pathos. Churchill appears to be, in this and other descriptions of himself, venting some of his distress at being ugly.

In line 184 the satirist remarks that "he studied by the glass of Truth," and this is consistent even with his frank descriptions of himself. Churchill was extremely large, raw-boned and strong. This rather awesome physique was bedizened with clothing more suited for a dandy than a clergyman. He was quick to admit the inappropriateness of his dress but, in the concluding stanza of the passage quoted, he has begged the issue by indicating that he was really an over-grown, jolly young man who really meant no harm.

The pangs of guilt for his behavior are again in evidence in The Conference, where he constructs a dialogue with a Lord. Several subjects come up before Churchill seizes the opportunity to verbalize his apparent remorse for his part in the affair with the

young Carr girl:

> Ah! what, my Lord, hath private life to do
> With things of public Nature? why to view
> Would You thus cruelly those scenes unfold,
> Which, without pain and horror to behold,
> Must speak me something more, or less than man;
> Which *Friends* may pardon, but I never can?
> Look back! a Thought which borders on despair,
> Which human Nature must, yet cannot bear.
> 'Tis not the babbling of a busy world,
> Where Praise and Censure are at random hurl'd,
> Which can the meanest of my thoughts controul,
> Or shake one settled purpose of my Soul.
> Free and at large might their wild curses roam,
> If All, if All alas! were well at home.
> No--'tis the tale which angry Conscience tells,
> When She with more than tragic horror swells
> Each circumstance of guilt; when stern, but true,
> She brings bad actions forth into review;
> And, like the dread hand-writing on the wall,
> Bids late Remorse awake at Reason's call,
> Arm'd at all points bids Scorpion Vengeance pass,
> And to the mind holds up Reflexion's glass,
> The mind, which starting, heaves the heart-felt groan,
> And hates that form She knows to be her own.
>
> Enough of this--let private sorrows rest--
> As to the Public I dare stand the test.... (213-238)

Churchill's interlocutor had been chastising him for his transgressions from accepted behavior, and the scandal with Elizabeth Carr is not the least of his past mistakes. He begins his reply with the argument that his private life is his own concern. Of course such a stand is illogical because the satirist himself has brought the subject up for discussion. But the passage is another instance where Churchill, apparently guilt-stricken by his mistakes, issued a public confession of his remorse both to ease his own conscience and to quell the innu-

endos of his critics. Although he admits he is being victimized by an "angry Conscience," he also makes his usual statement that public outcry caused him no concern. Once Churchill has confessed the weight of his guilt his penance is apparently complete, and he promptly moves on to other considerations.

These scattered personal revelations appear with little or no warning in his poems, and another shard of subjectivism is offered in The Conference. He gives an affectionate account of the generosity of Dr. Lloyd:

> Once, aw'd by Fortune's most oppressive frown,
> By legal rapine to the earth bow'd down,
> My Credit at last gasp, my State undone,
> Trembling to meet the shock I could not shun,
> Virtue gave ground, and blank despair prevail'd;
> Sinking beneath the storm, my Spirits fail'd,
> Like PETER's Faith, 'til One, a Friend indeed,
> May all distress find such in time of need,
> One kind good Man, in act, in word, in thought,
> By Virtue guided, and by Wisdom taught,
> Image of him whom Christians should adore,
> Stretch'd forth his hand, and brought me safe to shore.
> (107-118)

Fortunately the disaster of bankruptcy was averted. Churchill, when faced with the crisis, demonstrated his characteristic inability to act correctly. Instead of standing up to possible disaster he gave himself up to "blank despair." As he recounts this personal situation at a later date he is shamefaced by his lack of courage and strength in the time of crisis.

Churchill's subjectivism also frequently deals, in a light

manner, with his poetry. He enjoyed discrediting his style and method of composition, with his verse often being pictured as rude and unskilful because he did not have the patience to take adequate time in composition:

> RUDE and unskilful in the Poet's trade,
> I kept no Naiads by me ready-made;
> Ne'er did I colours high in air advance,
> Torn from the bleeding fopperies of France.... (170-173)

This selection is from The Apology, and the attitude he is expressing is allied to his illusory view of himself as an original genius. His most extended articulation of his method of writing is in Gotham, Book II:

> Had I the pow'r, I could not have the time,
> Whilst spirits flow, and Life is in her prime,
> Without a sin 'gainst Pleasure, to design
> A plan, to methodize each thought, each line
> Highly to finish, and make ev'ry grace,
> In itself charming, take new charms from place.
> Nothing of Books, and little known of men,
> When the mad fit comes on, I seize the pen,
> Rough as they run, the rapid thoughts set down,
> Rough as they run, discharge them on the Town.
> Hence rude, unfinish'd brats, before their time,
> Are born into this idle world of rime,
> And the poor slattern MUSE is brought to bed
> With all her imperfections on her head.
> Some, as no life appears, no pulses play
> Through the dull, dubious mass, no breath makes way,
> Doubt, greatly doubt, till for a glass they call,
> Whether the Child can be baptiz'd at all.
> Others, on other grounds, objections frame,
> And, granting that the child may have a name,
> Doubt, as the Sex might well a midwife pose,
> Whether they should baptize it, Verse or Prose.
> .....
> In the small compass of my careless page

> Critics may find employment for an age;
> Without my blunders they were all undone;
> I twenty feed, where MASON can feed one. (165-186, 191-194)

This lighthearted joking about his poetry is not consistent with his actual practice. There are many indications that he was a careful workman, and passages such as this one are used to expand the original genius image.

Churchill's poetry has a highly virile quality seen in very few others, and his courage and vigor in attacking his enemies were almost indefatigable. Passages such as the following one from The Conference are both highly subjective and favorable to the poet:

> Let Me, as hitherto, still draw my breath,
> In love with life, but not in fear of death,
> And, if Oppression brings me to the grave,
> And marks him dead, She ne'er shall mark a slave,
> Let no unworthy marks of grief be heard,
> No wild laments, not one unseemly word;
> Let sober triumphs wait upon my bier,
> I won't forgive that Friend who drops one tear.
> Whether He's ravish'd in life's early morn,
> Or, in old age, drops like an ear of corn,
> Full ripe He falls, on Nature's noblest plan,
> Who lives to Reason, and who dies a Man. (381-392)

He was not just a sinner overmastered by guilt; he had qualities admired in the best of men, and both sides of his character are well reflected in his poems.

Churchill's last poem, The Journey, proved to be prophetic. His friends had been chiding him for writing so fast that he would burn out his powers at an early age, and he jokes about their concern:

That I should run my stock of Genius out,
My no great stock, and, publishing so fast,
Must needs become a Bankrupt at the last. (7-10)

In the last line of the poem he makes a statement that ironically proved accurate soon after: "I on my Journey all Alone proceed" (166).

The subjective strain in Churchill's satires is perhaps the most distinguishing feature of his style. A selection of passages such as has just been presented gives an indication of his subjective tendencies; however, the reader is above all conscious of the poet's personality in nearly all that he wrote. The majority of the illustrations selected in the analysis of Churchill's personal and individual qualities dealt with the more unfavorable expressions of his psychological disturbances as the result of his guilt. This is not to imply that he did not have many admirable traits and that his poems do not also express these. A more extensive discussion of the subjective demonstration of his strong character traits has been omitted because they are quite well elaborated in the discussion of other pre-romantic elements in his poetry. His fearlessness and love for his country, for example, will be evident in Chapter Four when his views on freedom are discussed. Like many men Churchill was a frustrated mixture of good and not so good characteristics. He made many mistakes, but there is indication that he either repented these or tried to. His poems present a lasting record of

his attempts to justify his actions and to absolve himself of the guilt emanating from his improper behavior.

CHAPTER FOUR

FREEDOM

> FREEDOM--at that most hallow'd name
> My Spirits mount into a flame,
> Each pulse beats high, and each nerve strains
> E'en to the cracking; thro' my veins
> The tides of life more rapid run,
> And tell me I am FREEDOM's Son--
> FREEDOM came next, but scarse was seen,
> When the sky, which appear'd serene
> And gay before, was overcast;
> Horror bestrode a foreign blast,
> And from the prison of the North,
> To FREEDOM deadly, Storms burst forth. (IV, 1679-1690)

There have been, of course, zealous advocates of freedom since before the time that literature was first used to record the thoughts of man. Attacks on oppression--whether social, intellectual, governmental, or economic--are, however, more fervent in some eras than in others. To be passionate the climate of abuse must be flagrant, and there must be men of genius to lead the resistance.

The romantic era in many respects grew out of a frenzied revolutionary milieu. The Industrial Revolution, which made many pathetic humans slaves to the machine, and the French Revolution were both products of the eighteenth century. The long public outcry for freedom from political and social oppression caught the imaginations of the romantic writers and several became activists for the cause of freedom; Byron was to champion the fight in Greece and

the young Wordsworth that of the French. And, as one writer has remarked,

> ...a democratic attitude: insistence on the rights and dignity of man, and on the freedom of the individual socially and politically....[1]

is characteristic of pre-romanticism. Allied to these tendencies is a strong strain of nationalism, and many romantic writers were zealously nationalistic.

This fervor became well-established during the latter half of the eighteenth century. Augustan England, especially the political scene, was sufficiently corrupt that writers such as Churchill sincerely felt that the people were being denied their civil liberties. The battle that ensued for the cause of "Wilkes and Liberty" is typical of the pre-romantic concern with freedom.

The epigraph from The Ghost at the beginning of this chapter is an emotional instance of Churchill's arraignment of the enemies of his beloved England. The references to "foreign," "prison," and "North" in conjunction with the storm motif he develops are associated with Bute. The poet is rewording the popular idea, which was allied to the English dislike for the Scotch, that Bute was in conspiracy with a group of Scots who planned to take over England to revenge past evils done to Scotland.

[1] Ernest Bernbaum, Guide through the Romantic Movement (New York, 1949), p. 35.

But Churchill's interest in civil liberty and freedom even predate his friendship with Wilkes. His feelings are allied to his position on restraint, and this will be discussed in Chapter Five. The general quality in the poet throughout all of his work is noted by one critic:

> ...when England's national and civic freedom was trampled in the dust, he rose and gave a trumpet-call that roused the spirits of his compatriots.[2]

His poems show the typically romantic interest in freedom from oppression.

Churchill and Wilkes were supporters of William Pitt, the great Whig leader. They identified him with the House of Hanover, the Revolution of 1688, and the Magna Carta. In The North Briton they mercilessly attacked the Tories, Stuarts, and Jacobites because they were felt to hold sympathies counter to the principles of the Revolution, which had abolished the concept of divine right and absolute authority of the Crown. George III and the Tories represented, they felt, a distinct threat to the constitutional liberties of all Englishmen as established by the Magna Carta. George signed the Peace of Paris, and they saw this as a symbol of the loss of freedom that men such as Pitt had fought for. And the spirit of revolt and independence that Churchill subsequently conveyed is typical of the great romanticists: "In him we find the spirit of revolt

[2] T. F. Broadhurst, "Parson, Poet, and Beau," The Sewanee Review, XXV (October 1917), 469.

against authority that appears in the early romanticists. . . ."[3]

It should be noted at this point, however, that he was neither a revolutionist nor a monarchist. Churchill would not have agreed with Thomas Hobbes' theory that unlimited monarchy was the best form of government. And, even though a critic of the rule of George III, he advocated constitutional government. Under a properly administered constitutional government each Englishman received the maximum in freedom. He loved England with a true nationalism, and he continually argued in his poems for the restoration and preservation of civil liberties; this was also the purpose of The North Briton. Here he and Wilkes

> . . . brought up such basic points of democratic policy as the free press, the liberty of the subjects, and, ultimately, the responsibility of the ministers for the contents of the speech from the throne.[4]

An examination of Churchill's poetry shows him lashing out against those people and institutions that, in addition to being identified with hated authority, threaten man's freedom, liberty, or independence. Since a great deal of this activity was directed within the context of the political scene, particularly in defense of the policies of Wilkes, the ensuing discussion will first treat Churchill's

[3] Joseph M. Beatty, Jr., "Charles Churchill's Treatment of the Couplet," PMLA, XXXIV, N. S., No. 27 (March 1919), 60.

[4] George Nobbe, The North Briton: A Study in Political Propaganda (New York, 1939), p. vii.

love of freedom as it relates to politics.

Churchill's fondness for pillorying the Scots has already been noted. He felt that these "aliens" posed a threat, through their infiltration of English politics, to English freedom. The Prophecy of Famine is a commendable example of his ability to deal with the subject in a fresh manner, and the ominous prophecy of Famine in the last 150 lines of the poem serves as an indictment of his favorite target, Lord Bute:

> Already is this game of fate begun
> Under the sanction of my Darling Son,
> That Son, whose nature, royal as his name,
> Is destin'd to redeem our race from shame.
> His boundless pow'r, beyond example great,
> Shall make the rough way smooth, the crooked straight,
> Shall for our ease the raging floods restrain,
> And sink the mountain level to the plain.
> DISCORD, whom in a cavern under ground
> With massy fetters their late Patriot bound,
> Where her own flesh the furious Hag might tear,
> And vent her curses to the vacant air,
> Where, that she never may be heard of more,
> He planted LOYALTY to guard the door,
> For better purpose shall Our Chief release,
> Disguise her for a time, and call her PEACE.
>
> Lur'd by that name, fine engine of deceit,
> Shall the weak ENGLISH help themselves to cheat;
> To gain our love, with honours shall they grace
> The old adherents of the STUART race,
> Who pointed out, no matter by what name,
> TORIES or JACOBITES, are still the same;
> To sooth our rage, the temporising brood
> Shall break the ties of truth and gratitude,
> Against their Saviour venom'd falshoods frame,
> And brand with calumny their WILLIAM's name;
> To win our grace, (rare argument of wit)
> To our untainted faith shall they commit

> (Our faith which, in extremest perils tried,
> Disdain'd, and still disdains, to change her side,)
> That Sacred Majesty they all approve,
> Who most enjoys, and best deserves their Love.
> (531-562)

In these lines Bute is referred to by Famine as the Messiah of the Scottish people, and he is imagined as the instrument of revenge upon England for the numerous wrongs perpetrated by her sons against the Scotch in the past enmity between the countries. Churchill is here warning England to beware of this potential threat to its freedom, and he is in hopes of reversing the practice of the day of appointing Scottish ministers. The technique here is indirection, with no direct comment from the poet, and vile Famine's prophecy must have caused no little uneasiness among his countrymen.

The Ghost, Book IV, treats in capsular form this same theme. Churchill presents another uncomplimentary portrait of Bute as a murderer and destroyer of freedom:

> In the right-hand a sword He bore
> Harder than Adamant, and more
> Fatal than winds, which from the mouth
> Of the rough North invade the South;
> The reeking blade to view presents
> The blood of helpless Innocents,
> And on the hilt, as meek become
> As Lambs before the Shearers dumb,
> With downcast eye, and solemn show
> Of deep unutterable woe,
> Mourning the time when FREEDOM reign'd,
> Fast to a rock was Justice chain'd. (1823-1834)

Bute and his fellow Scotchmen did not fare well when confronted with

the ire of Churchill and Wilkes.

Another target for Churchill's defense of English liberty was the Stuarts, and the central poem in this context is Gotham. The poet enthrones himself as the ideal monarch of this kingdom in order that he might point out the wrongs of the current rule in England. The Stuarts strangled Freedom during their reign, and they must never rule again because of their past abuses:

> O my poor People, O thou wretched Earth,
> To whose dear love, tho' not engag'd by birth,
> My heart is fix'd, my service deeply sworn,
> .....
> How must thy glories fade, in ev'ry land
> Thy name be laugh'd to scorn, thy mighty hand
> Be shorten'd, and thy zeal, by foes confess'd,
> Bless'd in thy self, to make thy neighbours bless'd,
> Be robb'd of vigour, how must Freedom's pile,
> The boast of ages, which adorns the Isle
> And makes it great and glorious, fear'd abroad,
> Happy at home, secure from force and fraud,
> .....
> In one short moment into ruins fall,
> Should any Slip of STUART's tyrant race
> Or bastard, or legitimate, disgrace
> Thy royal seat of Empire.... (251-253, 257-264, 268-271)

This portrait of Stuart failure and oppression from Book II is continued, and Churchill is generally loyal to historical fact in his account. Almost any evil is preferred to the general ruination of English freedom that would accompany their return:

> This, or my soul deceives me, I could bear;
> But that of STUART race my Crown should wear,
> That Crown, where, highly cherish'd, FREEDOM shone
> Bright as the glories of the mid-day Sun,
> Born and bred Slaves, that They, with proud misrule,

> Should make brave, free-born men, like boys at school,
> To the Whip crouch and tremble--O, that Thought!
> (319-323)

The Stuarts were the antithesis of constitutional rule, and Churchill equates them with tyranny: "...to wear a Tyrant's chain, / Or let, in FREEDOM's seat, a STUART reign" (333-334).

He goes on to give the actual biographies of several Stuart monarchs. All ruled poorly because they deprived the people of their rights. When Charles II died and was replaced by James II, the final Stuart king, the lawless period continued:

> ...such a reign--so glaring an offence
> In ev'ry step 'gainst Freedom, Law, and Sense,
> .....
> 'Gainst all which constitutes an Englishman....
> (641-642, 644)

During their hold on the throne "...ENGLAND wept at FREEDOM's sacred tomb" (656).

Fortunately for England the period of oppression had been successfully endured. The Revolution of 1688 had established freedom, and this was ensured when William ascended the throne. But the Stuarts, as well as the Tories, whom he associated with Oxford University, were still potential threats to English liberty. Along with others like them they could always return, and caution needed to be exercised to prevent this.

The anti-Stuart sentiment of Churchill is also communicated in The Conference:

> But when in after-times (be far remov'd
> That day) our Monarch, glorious and belov'd,
> Sleeps with his Fathers, should imperious Fate
> In vengeance with fresh STUART's curse our state;
> Should They, o'erleaping ev'ry fence of Law,
> Butcher the brave to keep tame fools in awe;
> Should They, by brutal and oppressive force,
> Divert sweet Justice from her even course;
> .....
> Still would I keep my course, still speak, still write,
> Till Death hath plung'd me in the shades of Night.
> (361-368, 373-374)

Even if these tyrants returned to power Churchill would exercise the freedom of the muse in exposing their evils to the public eye. Only death would silence him.

The pivotal work in the body of his political satires defending freedom is The Duellist. Here the enemies of Wilkes, who is characterized as the fearless champion of mass freedom, are pictured as vermin who would undermine the structure of the House of Commons and English liberty. The poem is one of Churchill's more complex from the standpoint of imagery and allegory. The Temple of Liberty is symbolic of the Commons and the ruined state of contemporary liberty. The Temple is described in Book II of the poem:

> Antient, and much the worse for wear,
> It call'd aloud for quick repair,
> And, tottering from side to side,
> Menac'd destruction far and wide,
> Nor able seem'd, unless made stronger,
> To hold out four, or five years longer. (252-256)

The House of Commons, the emblem of English government, was

originally dedicated to liberty, and functions at the center of the allegory. Although it was nobly built, the efforts of later architects (statesmen) have been inadequate to make the necessary repairs where liberty has been weakened. Some of these men doubt whether "It must not, in all parts unsound, / Be ripp'd, and pull'd down to the ground...." (281-282)

Churchill goes on to further describe the building and its origin, alternating comparisons of the past and present. When it was constructed the English people possessed only the native virtues of love and respect for liberty. Business and politics were transacted in plain sight without deception. All citizens were warriors ready to fight for England, and they valued the private ownership of property as essential to freedom. They "Could never be to Slav'ry led, / For Property was at their head" (387-388). The England of Churchill, conversely, made men slaves to the land owned by the powerful.

After discussing what the Temple had looked like in its ideal period, and the character of the early patriots, he comments on his slothful contemporaries:

> ...in their stead,
> To laziness and vermin bred,
> A Race, who strangers to the cause
> Of Freedom, live by other laws,
> In other motives fight, a prey
> To interest, and slaves for pay. (393-398)

Free man has been replaced by a race of lazy slaves.

Churchill next introduces various allegorical figures who represent alternately the defenders and enemies of freedom, and the latter group is ascendant. Pitt (Hospitality) and Temple (Welcome) are replaced by Oeconomy, a pejorative term associated with Bute's much criticized economic programs.

Corrupt and indifferent ministers have made the English people weak and subervient to evil purposes. Earlier in the history of the country a printing press, the symbol of freedom, had been seen in the Temple "In regular and even rows, / Her types, a Printing-Press arose. . . ." (445-446). All was honest and in balance:

> Hence LEARNING struck a deeper root,
> And SCIENCE brought forth riper fruit;
> Hence LOYALTY receiv'd support,
> Even when banish'd from the Court;
> Hence GOVERNMENT was strength; and hence
> RELIGION sought, and found defence;
> Hence ENGLAND's fairest fame arose,
> And LIBERTY subdued her foes. (449-456)

Now the free press has been driven into extinction and all is under the control of the corrupt ministers: "The Printers saw--they saw and fled. . . ." (517). Even the goddess Liberty has been banished by political dishonesty:

> LIBERTY fled, her Friends withdrew,
> Her Friends, a faithful, chosen few;
> HONOUR in grief threw up, and SHAME,
> Cloathing herself with HONOUR's name,
> Usurp'd his station; on the throne,
> Which LIBERTY once call'd her own

(Gods, that such mighty ills should spring,
Under so great, so good a King,
So Lov'd, so Loving, thro' the arts
Of Statesmen, curs'd with wicked hearts!)
For ev'ry darker purpose fit,
Behold in triumph STATE-CRAFT sit. (531-542)

Book II is concluded on this sombre note of destroyed freedom.

Book III of The Duellist treats the envisioned conspiracy to assassinate Wilkes for his defenses of English civil liberties. The plotters--Warburton, Norton, and Martin--plan their skulduggery in the cave of Fraud, which was located beneath the Temple of Liberty. They are the allegorical representatives of the hated ministry and its schemes. Ultimately Martin, as in real life, will be the one to confront Wilkes. The trio debates the most effective manner in which to provoke Wilkes, and ultimately Fraud has the answer:

'To Honour only he's a slave;
'In that weak part without defence,
'We must to Honour make pretence;
'That Lure shall to his ruin draw
'The Wretch, who stands secure in Law. (986-990)

The decision made, "M[ARTIN], the Duellist, came forth...." (1013) to issue the challenge to Wilkes. Martin is ironically praised for his "worth" (1014) by Churchill, and the poem ends with only public knowledge of the actual duel to serve as illustration of the poet's argument.

Churchill has been inferring that if these politicians would murder the worthy patriot Wilkes they would also prevent any efforts

to establish English civil liberties. A similar argument is presented in The Author:

> Is this the Land, where, in some Tyrant's reign,
> When a weak, wicked Ministerial train,
> The tools of pow'r, the slaves of int'rest, plann'd
> Their Country's ruin, and with bribes unman'd
> Those wretches, who, ordain'd in Freedom's cause,
> Gave up our liberties, and sold our laws;
> When Pow'r was taught by Meanness where to go,
> Nor dar'd to love the Virtue of a foe;
> When, like a lep'rous plague, from the foul head
> To the foul heart her sores Corruption spread,
> Her iron arm when stern Oppression rear'd,
> And Virtue, from her broad base shaken, fear'd
> The scourge of Vice; when, impotent and vain,
> Poor Freedom bow'd the neck to Slav'ry's chain...?
> (73-86)

Churchill felt that the state of English politics was in dangerous trouble, and he wanted to create a unified public opinion against the current political regime.

In An Epistle to William Hogarth the poet finds time to leave his main subject and digress on the excise, one means of a financial kind to extract liberty from the poor English:

> WHILST Vice presumptuous lords it as in sport,
> And Piety is only known at Court;
> Whilst wretched LIBERTY expiring lies
> Beneath the fatal burthen of EXCISE.... (183-186)

Why do the people fail to rise up in opposition to these impositions on their freedom? In Independence Churchill says that, with a small group of his friends, he will rise to the occasion and help to drive the evil ministry from power with the courage of conviction:

> O my poor COUNTRY--weak and overpow'r'd
> By thine own Sons--eat to the bone--devour'd
> By Vipers, which, in thine own entrails bred,
> Prey on thy life, and with thy blood are fed,
> With unavailing grief thy wrongs I see,
> And, for myself not feeling, feel for Thee.
> I grieve, but can't despair--for, Lo, at hand
> FREEDOM presents a choice, but faithful band
> Of Loyal PATRIOTS, Men who greatly dare
> In such a noble cause, Men fit to bear
> The weight of Empires....
> .....
> ...FREEDOM from file to file
> Darts her delighted eye, and with a smile
> Approves her honest Sons.... (555-565, 567-569)

After this ardent statement of his commitment Churchill proceeds to issue a charge to all patriots to come to the aid of their weak and beseiged homeland:

> O Ye brave Few, in whom we still may find
> A Love of Virtue, Freedom, and Mankind,
> Go forth--in Majesty of Woe array'd,
> See, at your feet Your COUNTRY kneels for aid,
> And, (many of her children traitors grown,)
> Kneels to those Sons She still can call her own,
> Seeming to breathe her last in ev'ry breath,
> She kneels for Freedom, or She begs for Death--
> Fly then, each duteous Son, each English Chief,
> And to your drooping Parent bring relief. (573-582)

The patriot-poet Churchill sounds the call for other loyal Englishmen to oppose, like himself, the evils of the administration. "Freedom," "Virtue," and humanitarianism are all associated as he pleads to the people to rise up.

One of the chief measures to insure individual freedom was the proper compact between the ruler and subjects. The Magna

Carta was such a document. In The Ghost, Book IV, he outlines the significance and responsibility of the coronation of George III; he inherited an honorable agreement by which he must govern:

> When our Lov'd Monarch, nothing loth,
> Solemnly took the sacred oath,
> Whence mutual firm agreements spring
> Betwixt the Subject, and the King,
> By which, in usual manner crown'd,
> His Head, his Heart, his Hands he bound,
> Against himself, should Passion stir
> That least Propensity to err,
> Against all Slaves, who might prepare
> Or open force, or hidden snare,
> That glorious CHARTER to maintain,
> By which We serve, and He must reign.... (415-426)

But Churchill sadly admits a few lines later that the Magna Carta has been abused by George: "The famous CHARTER of our land, / Defac'd, and mangled in his hand...." (665-666).

In An Epistle to William Hogarth one of the reasons he brutally condemns the artist is because of his pro-administration alignment. How can Hogarth be great if he is in league with the enemies of freedom as established by the Magna Carta?

> WHEN that GREAT CHARTER, which our Fathers bought
> With their best blood, was into question brought;
> When, big with ruin, o'er each English head
> Vile Slav'ry hung suspended by a thread;
> When LIBERTY, all trembling and aghast,
> Fear'd for the future, knowing what was past;
> .....
> Lurking, most Ruffian-like, behind a screen,
> So plac'd all things to see, himself unseen,
> VIRTUE, with due contempt, saw HOGARTH stand,
> The murd'rous pencil in his palsied hand.
> What was the cause of Liberty to him,

> Or what was Honour? let him sink or swim,
> So he may gratify without controul
> The mean resentments of his selfish soul.
> Let Freedom perish, if, to Freedom true,
> In the same ruin WILKES may perish too.
> (401-406, 409-418)

Churchill refers here to the surreptitious portrait of Wilkes done by Hogarth during the patriot's trial.

In The Duellist, Book II, Liberty always had near her the allegorized figure of Magna Carta, "...the basis of her reign...." (472). Likewise, in Gotham, Book I, the idea of the Magna Carta as a freedom-giving symbol appears:

> An ENGLISHMAN, in charter'd FREEDOM born,
> Shall spurn the slavish merchandise, shall scorn
> To take from others, thro' base private views,
> What He himself would rather die, than lose. (49-52)

Later in Book II of the poem he mentions that James II "...wrench'd/ From its due, nat'ral frame...." (657-658) the Constitution. Fortunately the Revolution of 1688 and William III were to rescue England:

> Whilst She (thro' ev'ry age, in ev'ry land,
> Written in gold let REVOLUTION stand)
> Whilst She, secur'd in Liberty and Law,
> Found what She sought, a Savior in NASSAU. (II, 675-678)

Churchill and Wilkes met soon after The Ghost, Book I, was written. From this juncture until the end of his life his poetry was very much concerned with defending English liberty and attacking those who threatened its propagation. Churchill developed the

hypothesis that nature had given man as his birthright freedom, and man should have a free choice to use this gift. Both the subject and the ruler are given equal freedom, and each has the responsibility to fight for the continuation of civil freedom against those who would seek to inhibit it:

> NATURE, who in her act most free,
> Herself delights in Liberty,
> Profuse in Love, and, without bound,
> Pours joy on ev'ry creature round;
> Whom yet, was ev'ry bounty shed
> In double Portions on our head,
> We could not truly bounteous call,
> If FREEDOM did not crown them all. (The Ghost, IV, 226-234)

There is a similar passage in Book I of The Duellist:

> Hail, LIBERTY! a glorious word,
> In other countries scarsely heard,
> Or heard but as a thing of course,
> Without or Energy or Force;
> Here felt, enjoy'd, ador'd, she springs,
> Far, far beyond the reach of Kings,
> Fresh blooming from our Mother Earth;
> With Pride and Joy she owns her birth
> Deriv'd from us, and in return
> Bids in our breasts her Genius burn;
> Bids us with all those blessings live
> Which LIBERTY alone can give,
> Or nobly with that Spirit die,
> Which makes Death more than Victory. (175-188)

The English people are fortunate to have the joys of liberty available, and they must commit themselves to the death if necessary to insure its preservation.

The man of letters, especially, should raise his voice in outcry against the opponents of liberty, and Churchill proudly adds his

zealous voice to the cause in An Epistle to William Hogarth:

> BUT, of events regardless, whilst the Muse
> Perhaps with too much heat her theme pursues;
> While her quick Spirits rouze at FREEDOM's call,
> And ev'ry drop of blood is turned to gall,
> Whilst a dear Country, and an injur'd Friend,
> Urge my strong anger to the bitt'rest end,
> Whilst honest trophies to revenge are rais'd,
> Let not One real Virtue pass unprais'd. (531-538)

In The Conference Churchill utters a further dedication to the noble cause of English freedom:

> As to the Public I dare stand the test;
> Dare proudly boast, I feel no wish above
> The good of ENGLAND, and my Country's love.
> Stranger to Party-rage, by Reason's voice,
> Unerring guide, directed in my choice,
> Not all the tyrant pow'rs of earth combin'd,
> No, nor of hell, shall make me change my mind.
> What! herd with men my honest soul disdains,
> Men who, with servile zeal, are forging chains
> For Freedom's neck, and lend a helping hand,
> To spread destruction o'er my native land. (238-248)

Independence is Churchill's most sustained work of incantation for freedom, and he is often carried to flights of emotion-charged patriotism:

> Hail, INDEPENDENCE--tho' thy name's scarse known,
> Tho' Thou, Alas! art out of fashion grown,
> Tho' All despise Thee, I will not despise,
> Nor live one moment longer than I prize
> Thy presence, and enjoy; by angry Fate
> Bow'd down, and almost crush'd, Thou cam'st, tho' late,
> Thou cam'st upon me, like a second birth,
> And made me know what life was truly worth.
> Hail, INDEPENDENCE--never may my Cot,
> Till I forget Thee, be by Thee forgot.... (509-518)

Churchill's idea of the perfect ruler, expressed in Book III of

Gotham, is that of a patriot king: "A PATRIOT KING--Why 'tis a name which bears/ The more immediate stamp of heaven. . . ." (63-64). This apotheosis of kingship has the main duty "TO KNOW" (328) where other rulers are not cognizant of the public welfare. With God as his guide the civil liberties of his subjects will be recognized and continued. Both the ruler and the ruled must be unified by the love of country before self-interest:

> The Love we bear our Country, is a root
> Which never fails to bring forth golden fruit,
> 'Tis in the mind an everlasting Spring
> Of glorious actions, which become a King
> Nor less become a Subject; 'tis a debt
> Which bad Men, tho' they pay not, can't forget;
> A duty, which the Good delight to pay,
> And ev'ry Man can practice ev'ry day. (275-282)

This passage from The Farewell summarizes the necessity for patriotism and the good that it can foster. As Churchill had remarked earlier in the poem: ". . . be England what She will, / With all her faults She is my Country still" (27-28). Man must love his country and fight for those things that promote freedom for all.

Of the pre-romantic characteristics being discussed in this thesis as they appear in Churchill's satires, the poet's ardent love of freedom is probably the most prevalent. Even though his early poetry gives evidence of a lifelong concern with this subject, Churchill's thoughts on freedom matured and prospered under the aegis of the controversial Wilkes. From the time of their first acquaint-

ance Churchill's satirical concerns are to a great extent related to the political embroilments of Wilkes. And the poet felt that to defend his friend was equivalent of defending English freedom.

CHAPTER FIVE

OPPOSITION TO RULES

The classical spirit in English literature began to proliferate after the time of Ben Jonson. Study, and an emphasis upon "Common Sense" and "Reason," gradually supplanted inspiration as a guide to poetic composition. With the new scientific discoveries came an increased confidence in the fidelity of reasoned observation rather than the intuitive powers.

The restraint that developed out of this rather complicated set of circumstances was to restrict the creative impulse in literature to some extent because of the dedication to a set of narrow literary precepts. To the neo-classicist nature was equivalent to an art that conforms to fixed rules; man had only to study nature to find these immutable laws. The ancient poets and critics had been revived during the Renaissance and were to be studied as the exemplars of a "reasonable" starting point for codifying literary practice:

> ...eighteenth-century writers who listed labor and learning as essentials of poetic composition were only continuing the traditions of respect for the ancients and for reason which had already blended in the seventeenth-century decision that 'the rules of Aristotle were nothing but nature and good sense reduc'd to a method,' or, as the eighteenth-

> century itself expressed it, 'nature still but nature methodized.'[1]

Thomas Hobbes and others were to comment on the universal laws of literary endeavor, and this undoubtedly added fuel to the tendency to set down rules to follow blindly. The ancients as interpreted by the Italian Renaissance were studied assiduously as it was felt that certain universal laws could be discovered in this manner. These rules were formulated ultimately and became for a time the standard of judgment for the eighteenth-century man of letters.

By mid-century it is not difficult to discern evidence of an easing of the tendency in criticism and literature to adhere to such codifications: "...the irregular ideal grew even stronger. Only minor, uninspired voices remained to support the rules."[2] There is a movement toward freedom of expression and away from restraint, toward variety rather than rigid order:

> The growing tradition of taste...fostered an attitude of subjective individualism that eventually refused the rules on any authority whatsoever....Addison's claim 'there is more beauty in the work of a great genius who is ignorant of all the rules of art, than in the works of a little genius, who not only knows, but scrupulously observes them,' encouraged men gradually but definitely to progress towards that critical code that puts the rules out of court for all poets

[1] Margaret M. Fitzgerald, First Follow Nature: Primitivism in English Poetry, 1725-1750 (New York, 1947), p. 146.

[2] Ibid., pp. 156-157.

great or little.[3]

A few Churchill critics have remarked the satirist's lifelong scorn for authority. This attitude carries over into his poetry, and the poet is seen indefatigably lashing those writers and literary critics who pay blind subservience to the fixed set of literary rules garnered from the ancients. He despised the implied insincerity of such imitation. Chalmers summarizes this quality in Churchill quite well:

> ...he despised regularity in every thing; and whatever was within rules, bore an air of restraint to which his proud spirit could not submit.[4]

Churchill's life, as well as his poetry, gives sufficient witness to his basic abhorrence of people and institutions representing authority. Cazamian has made a similar observation to that of Chalmers: "...from all his work there emanates an air of impatience and a scorn of rules which fetter poets as with paralyzing bonds."[5]

The most extended assessment of Churchill's invective against literary rules is provided by the poet's chief biographer:

[3] Fitzgerald, p. 149.

[4] Alexander Chalmers, The General Biographical Dictionary, Vol. IX (London, 1813), p. 270.

[5] Louis Cazamian, A History of English Literature, Vol. II (New York, 1927), p. 185.

> . . . his own compulsive individualism and the changing climate of critical opinion of his day led him to reject. . . important tenets of neo-classicism. One of these was the classical Rules as 'nature methodized'. . . . Churchill's attitude is so consistently anti-Rules that we must consider him against them on principle.[6]

Throughout his poetry he is contemptuous of the blind accepters of rules. To him such laws educed connotations of dullness, correctness in the pejorative sense, and slavish imitation rather than desired originality. It took courage to break with these rules, but now many of the most fearless of writers, like Charles Churchill himself, disregarded them.

Brown goes on to discuss the reasons Churchill adopted this anti-rules position:

> . . . the Rules were satisfactory for Aristotle because they were drawn from nature and suited the poetic practice of the day; therefore he could give his 'reasons' for them. Now, however, the Rules have become 'servile' because they no longer square with nature and are not followed by the best poets. Therefore the modern critics who apply them do so arbitrarily.[7]

Churchill consistently follows this rationale throughout the body of his poetry.

The following passage from "An Epistle to R. L. L." demonstrates his hatred of the doctrinaires:

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[6] Wallace Cable Brown, "Charles Churchill and Criticism in Transition," JEGP, XLII (April 1944), p. 166.

[7] Ibid., p. 167.

> Then borne on wings of fire, he [the bard] quits
> The servile track of critick wits;
> Rejects the doctrines of the schools,
> And soars beyond the reach of rules;
> Leaving those laws to be obey'd
> By fools, which first by fools were made. (29-34)

The poet was to stress throughout the body of his work the contempt for rules and the makers of rules, that he presents in capsule form in this poem. Here he is developing his conviction that the true poet is one who creates from inspiration. No imitator, blindly accepting that set down for him by a tribe of ineffectual critics, he is the true bard. This basic desire to write poetry free from unquestioning allegiance to that which is established reached its zenith when Wordsworth and Coleridge shocked the literary world with the Lyrical Ballads.

During the same year that he wrote "An Epistle to R. L. L.," 1761, Churchill brought out his first published poem, The Rosciad. He assails the same critical dogmatism in this poem, yet the concentration is upon satirizing the theatre. Again he defends the natural against the artificial, but here the reference is to acting technique. His beliefs on the numb reverence for established rules are scattered and less organized than in the earlier poem. This loose texture of ideas is further amplified by the several later expansions of the poem by Churchill. For the remainder of his life, he was to append sketches of other actors and actresses. In this

piece he bludgeoned the critics:

> --A servile race,
> Who, in mere want of fault, all merit place;
> Who blind obedience pay to ancient schools,
> Bigots to Greece, and slaves to musty rules. . . . (183-186)

As in "An Epistle to R. L. L.," he fearlessly disputes the eighteenth-century reverence for the ancients, particularly the "musty rules" that have been dodified through the critical "interpretation" of their works and ideas.

Churchill's iconoclasm is also apparent in The Apology. He shows his bitterness because of the abuse that he feels he has unjustly suffered at the hands of his enemies the critics:

> A CRITIC was of old a glorious name,
> Whose sanction handed merit up to fame:
> Beauties as well as faults he brought to view:
> His Judgment great, and great his Candour too.
> No servile rules drew sickly taste aside;
> Secure he walk'd, for Nature was his guide.
> But now, Oh strange reverse! our Critics bawl
> In praise of Candour with a Heart of Gall.
> Conscious of guilt, and fearful of the light,
> They lurk enshrouded in the veil of night:
> Safe from detraction, seize the unwary prey,
> And stab, like bravoes, all who come that way. (49-60)

Churchill's critics, for him typical of the inferiority of modern criticism, could only attack his faults. They were incapable, unlike the ancients, of making just comment also upon his merits. The rule of the day was servility to narrow concepts which taught only to "stab." Contemporary English letters were in "a slavish state" (72), but the older critics were superior because they "rules

from Nature drew" (91).

Churchill was never one to eschew the temptations that beset him. He condemns as unimaginative and banal, in Night, the critics of his dissolute living:

> THE Wretch bred up in Method's drowsy school,
> Whose only merit is to err by rule,
> Who ne'er thro' heat of blood was tripping caught,
> Nor guilty deem'd of one eccentric thought,
> Whose soul directed to no use is seen
> Unless to move the body's dull Machine.... (19-24)

Here the satirist is vilifying those censors of his life, and he is saying that they merely go through the movements of life at night. They are steeped in somnolence and, although Churchill may err, he is at least free from the rules of life others would set for him. They are cold, banal, and dull. He may be eccentric in his thought by the standards of his time, but he is at least a man of his own convictions. Many of the other writers of his time, he felt, follow mechanic art and fashion without questioning.

Churchill continues to pursue this anti-authoritarian penchant. At the same time he advances his indictment of the hypocrites who condemn the satirist for vices that they themselves are guilty of surreptitiously. The poet further admonishes these false critics, and asserts his characteristic self-dependence:

> GO on, ye fools, who talk for talking sake,
> Without distinguishing distinctions make;
> Shine forth in native folly, native pride,
> Make yourselves rules to all the world beside;

> Reason, collected in herself, disdains
> The slavish yoke of arbitrary chains,
> Steady and true each circumstance she weighs,
> Nor to bare words inglorious tribute pays. (41-48)

"Reason" was to become an important yardstick for quantitative and qualitative judgment in the eighteenth century. In this passage Churchill demonstrates his rationalistic individualism. He is stating that the rational man can look through "Nature" and find the true systems without reliance upon the authority of arbitrary rules set by a bevy of second-rate critics.

At the outset of Book II of The Ghost the satirist attacks the convention of beginning a poem with an invocation. These prayers were originally instituted as part of a religious tradition, but by Churchill's time only "Custom" governed their use. To him the invocation had become "A SACRED standard Rule" (1). The poet's contemporaries no longer felt or thought like the ancients, so Churchill observes:

> Why should we servile customs chuse,
> And court an antiquated Muse?
> No matter why--to ask a Reason
> In PEDANT BIGOTRY is Treason. (79-82)

This aside on the pedantic followers of the ancients for their own sake concludes the long elaboration by the poet of his views on the subject of rules.

In Book IV he comments at length upon several terms that were in a state of flux at mid-century. His dissemination of such terms

as "Reason," "Imagination," "Nature," "Fancy," and "Wit" would afford an interesting study in themselves. His use of these words, however, is somewhat inconsistent in his writing. He characterizes the last item as follows:

> --if WIT, who ne'er
> The shackles of restrain could bear,
> In wayward humour should refuse
> Her timely succour to the Muse,
> And to no rules and orders tied
> Roughly deny to be her guide,
> She must renounce Decorum's plan.... (825-831)

Churchill believed that man's wit was inherently opposed to restraint but, unless a conscious effort is made to avoid the rules imposed upon the writer by "Decorum," the wit will be unfortunately stultified.

In The Prophecy of Famine Churchill dedicates himself to the Goddess Nature, whom he opposes to rules:

> Thou, NATURE, art my goddess--to thy law
> Myself I dedicate--hence slavish awe
> Which bends to fashion, and obeys the rules,
> Impos'd at first, and since observ'd by fools. (93-96)

Although he is serious in his opposition of Nature to slavish rules, he is here ironically setting the Goddess' locale in hated Scotland. He ridicules the primitive simplicity for which the country was noted. In Scotland Nature, the poet is ruefully saying, is less spoiled by Art than elsewhere.

This poem marks the emergence of Churchill as a political

satirist. His friendship with John Wilkes exerted a pervasive influence upon the direction of his poetry until his death. He spent his last years immersed in Wilkes' personal and political conflicts. For this reason, although there is no evidence that the poet altered his viewpoint, and there are shards of ideas on this same subject scattered throughout his remaining poems, his later poetry is lacking in the previous amount of involvement in questions of writing and literary criticism. But the satirist's mode of life, and his hue and cry for freedom from the tyranny of George III and his supporters, afford sufficient evidence of his continued hatred of oppression in all things.

Another onslaught of rules appears in The Author. The poem marks a brief return to literary questions. Whereas the poem purports to be a defense of the satirist's license to indict the vices of his society, it is in reality little more than a castigation of individuals that Churchill wanted to attack. The poem opens with a condemnation of the false spirit of learning, and the poet soon uses rules as an exemplar of his point:

> O'er crabbed authors life's gay prime to waste,
> To cramp wild genius in the chains of taste,
> To bear the slavish drudgery of schools,
> And tamely stoop to ev'ry pedant's rules,
> For seven long years debarr'd of lib'ral ease,
> To plod in college trammels to degrees,
> Beneath the weight of solemn toys to groan,
> Sleep over books, and leave mankind unknown,
> To praise each senior blockhead's thread-bare tale,

> And laugh till reason blush, and spirits fail,
> Manhood with vile submission to disgrace,
> And cap the fool, whose merit is his Place.... (13-24)

Churchill derides the schools and the products they send out into the world.

Churchill continues, amid his invective upon individuals, to comment on the state of poetry in eighteenth-century England. The satirist expresses his opinion that the art is represented by many who are narrow and prejudiced in their viewpoints. He illustrates his point with one of his favorite subjects, "freedom," which was examined in all of its pre-romantic ramifications in Chapter Four. Here it is seen allied with his animosity for convention:

> Is this the Land, where, mindful of her charge
> And Office high, fair Freedom walk'd at large;
> Where, finding in our Laws a sure defense,
> She mock'd at all restraints.... (63-66)

In Churchill's mind freedom is associated with the self-reliant opposition to the stigma of outworn rules.

In Book I of Gotham he sketches briefly the fearless character of his friend Wilkes who, like Churchill himself, scorns servile allegiance to any convention:

> And, tho' by Fools despis'd, by Saints unbless'd,
> By Friends neglected, and by Foes oppress'd,
> Scorning the servile arts of each Court-Elf,
> Founded on Honour, Wilkes is still himself.... (465-468)

Churchill admires Wilkes because he will not change his personal convictions just to win court favor. Honor and truth to himself and

his ideals prevent him from becoming a slave to convention.

Whereas Book I has been essentially a light-hearted celebration of the poet's imagined kingship, Book II is a parody, similar to part of The Prophecy of Famine, of the eighteenth-century pastoral tradition in poetry. Here Churchill remarks that these poems are filled with excessive ornamentation that serves none of the dictates of good sense: "They have their wish: like idle monarch Boys, / Neglecting things of weight, they sigh for toys" (49-50). Again these poets are criticized by Churchill because they are following conventions for their own sake.

A final and more eloquent statement of the satirist's opposition to authority is seen in Independence, the last poem published during his lifetime. This poem is a hardy indictment of literary patronage, but it is shorter and less effective than Samuel Johnson's biting letter to Chesterfield. Churchill is saying that, unlike the real patrons of the ancient and Renaissance world, modern patrons are motivated by fashion rather than sincerity. The poet's freedom is worth too much to be tied to such an empty custom:

> Talk not of Custom--'tis the Coward's plea,
> Current with Fools, but passes not with me;
> An old stale trick, which guilt hath often tried
> By numbers to o'erpow'r the better side. (345-348)

The imitators of Churchill's day can link themselves to this dishonest custom, but the poet is one who will not sacrifice his artis-

tic integrity to follow outmoded rules of literary patronage.

Charles Churchill's self-dependence and defiant individualism led him to mock convention and authority throughout his brief life. In literature and life he would not adhere to a set of rules that were to be followed obediently simply because a few men of doubtful qualifications said that they were "correct." This pre-romantic tendency remained one of his lifelong convictions and is seen frequently at various junctures in his poems. This analysis of the manifestation of this tendency in Churchill has not endeavored to present all such evidences in his work. Only the more typical and extended examples have been utilized for purposes of this illustration.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The analysis in this thesis has been devoted to four aspects of pre-romanticism visible with frequency in the satires of Charles Churchill. It has been remarked how, throughout the body of his poetry, he defended original genius against what he felt was the slavish imitation and convention taught in the schools. Both his ardent love of English freedom, and the highly subjective character of his satires were also investigated. And, finally, Churchill's lifelong resistance to authority and rules was discussed. But it was pointed out, at the conclusion of Chapter One, that other foreshadowings of the romantics can be seen in his poetry. Separate chapters were not devoted to additional tendencies because the appearance of these in the poems is more irregular.

Before mentioning the less important manifestations of pre-romanticism in the poems it should be noticed that in some respects Churchill failed to write in the prescribed romantic fashion. He was not concerned with colloquial speech or the language and rhythms of commonplace vocabulary and, in many instances, he approached the poetic diction associated with the neo-classicists such as Pope. The other chief area of his demarcation from romantic tendencies is in a preference for nature as a subject and inspiration for literature.

Churchill was not a vivid natural scene painter, and the descriptions of external nature common to romanticism are not in evidence to any large extent in his poems.

However, Churchill was to demonstrate other affinities with the pre-romantics in his verse. The reader might well ask himself at this juncture how, if he restricted his published writing exclusively to the couplet form, he could relate to the pre-romantics in his verse. If pre-romantic literature is marked by a general resistance to convention and was a revolt against, among other things, the regularity of the heroic couplet in poetry, why did Churchill adhere to established tradition?

Although the heroic couplet had been the staple of the earlier neo-classic period it was by no means universal in Pope's time:

> Well before the middle of the century, poets...who had non-Augustan matter to impart and non-Augustan feelings to express, found themselves waxing 'romantic' in 'classic' form...the content of which cried loud for freedom and experiment.[1]

Churchill similarly expressed his pre-romantic viewpoints in the couplet form, and there are good reasons for this. During the period of his career London reigned supreme in matters of literature in England. The aspiring writer was dependent upon the reception of the London critics, and it was often necessary to sacrifice some of

[1] Alexander M. Witherspoon, ed., The College Survey of English Literature (New York, 1951), pp. 493-494.

one's ideals to avoid ridicule or even complete failure. In rural areas of the island this stigma of convention was more relaxed, but the possibility of success was proportionately slower in coming. The rural bards who defied the tradition of the heroic couplet were not rewarded in great measure for their "insolence." Despite his courageous statements to the contrary, Churchill also feared the pain that accompanied critical censure. Not unlike James Thomson, who arrived in the city with a strongly romantic work and promptly revised the poem to make it more orthodox, Churchill was practical in the face of so pervasive an influence.

But this is not to imply that he did not revolt in the form of his poetry; he was both to protest and to cleave to the couplet at once: "... in the poetry of Charles Churchill is to be found one of the earliest protests within the bounds of the heroic couplet."[2] The uniqueness of the innovation he effected is associated with his resistance to convention as discussed in Chapter Five. Beatty, after remarking that "... those whom he influenced were exponents of some phase of romanticism,"[3] goes on to comment about the influence of Shakespeare on Churchill:

[2] Earl R. Wasserman, "The Return of the Enjambed Couplet," ELH, VII (September 1940), 241.

[3] Joseph M. Beatty, Jr., "Charles Churchill's Treatment of the Couplet," PMLA, XXXIV, N. S. 27 (March 1919), 60.

> ...occasionally, when Churchill was especially moved, he leaped his bounds, and then, in those audacious passages that at once shocked and amazed his critics, he poured out all his emotion in powerful couplets which were almost blank verse. For the inspirer of these passages we must turn ... to Shakespeare....[4]

At his best Churchill could approximate the power of blank verse within the confines of the couplet, and this novel use of the form evoked unfavorable reactions from the neo-classical critics.

Winters makes an even more startling observation on the satirist's accomplishments within the form: "He is the most radical innovator in the history of the couplet...."[5] Furthermore, Churchill's is "...probably a more complex style than any one of them ever achieved...."[6] These remarks are made because of his mastery and use of the "enjambed" couplet, and this revolutionary change lent great freedom to his versification.

Churchill did not begin to utilize this method with any frequency until Gotham; this "...is a transition poem which anticipates the breakdown of the neo-classic couplet fifty years later."[7] His poetry prior to this work was largely conventional in form, and

[4] Ibid., p. 69.

[5] Ivor Winters, In Defense of Reason (Denver, 1947), p. 138.

[6] Ibid., p. 141.

[7] Wallace Cable Brown, Charles Churchill--Poet, Rake, and Rebel (Lawrence, Kansas, 1953), p. 145.

has been clearly identified with Dryden and Pope, but Churchill was "...a poet who, within the neo-classic tradition, altered it by certain technical achievements in the couplet form that had not appeared before."[8]

Churchill's early poems followed the epigrammatic heroic couplet of Pope and the neo-classicists. But he soon revolted, and he moved on to the freer open couplet that was more typical of Dryden. This enjambment, as the thought is allowed to run from one couplet to the next, promotes a feeling of unrestrained movement. An example of this is found in Book II of Gotham:

> Nothing of Books, and little known of men,
> When the mad fit comes on, I seize the pen,
> Rough as they run, the rapid thoughts set down,
> Rough as they run, discharge them on the Town. (171-174)

Churchill's style ultimately went beyond this revolt against the end-stopped couplet, and there are several trademarks of his best poetry that should be noted. As his sentences became longer and more complicated he employed the devices of parallel structure, ambivalent repetition of single words, and parenthetical interruptions. The repetitious use of words with shifting meanings is seen in The Prophecy of Famine:

> Which Art, too thinly veil'd, forbids to please,
> By Nature's charms (inglorious truth!) subdued,

[8] Brown, "Churchill's Mastery of the Heroic Couplet," JEGP, XLIV (January 1945), 12.

> However plain her dress, and haviour rude,
> To northern climes my happier course I steer,
> Climes where the Goddess reigns throughout the year,
> Where undisturb'd by Art's rebellious plan,
> She rules the loyal Laird, and faithful Clan. (104-110)

"Art" in this passage is utilized with different shades of meaning.

The quotation just given from Gotham also illustrates briefly Churchill's use of parallelism. The parenthetical interruptions are often quite lengthy, but the following selection from The Candidate shows several shorter examples within a few lines:

> For Me (nor dare I lie) my leading aim
> (Conscience first satisfied) is love of Fame,
> Some little Fame deriv'd from some brave few,
> Who, prizing Honour, prize her Vot'ries too.
> Let All (nor shall resentment flush my cheek)
> Who know me well, what they know, freely speak,
> So Those (the greatest curse I meet below)
> Who know me not, may not pretend to know. (123-130)

Beatty's observation of Churchill's indebtedness to Shakespearian blank verse has already been quoted on page 105. In Book I of Gotham there is a good example, as Churchill paraphrases the "Ages of Man" speech from As You Like It, of his attempts to approximate the rhythm and cadence of the blank verse:

> INFANCY, straining backward from the breast,
> Tetchy and wayward, what he loveth best
> Refusing in his fits, whilst all the while
> The Mother eyes the wrangler with a smile,
> And the fond Father sits on t'other side,
> Laughs at his moods, and views his spleen with pride,
> Shall murmur forth my name, whilst at his hand
> Nurse stands interpreter, thro' GOTHAM's land. (165-172)

Passages such as this one demonstrate that Churchill was able on

occasion to achieve power in his couplets similar to that of the blank verse.

This synthesis of the hallmarks of Churchill's poetic style in handling the couplet has been brief; but further examples are seen in abundance in the lines quoted during the course of the earlier analysis, and these are adequate testimony to the traits of his style.

So it was that Churchill demonstrated certain resemblances to the pre-romantic writers even in his prosody. His poetry provides a lasting record of the tension between the rival influences. In many respects Churchill was a classicist-traditionalist in his outlook, and in others he was in revolt in a typically romantic fashion. In his poetry he was only superficially classical, and he played a part in freeing the couplet from antiquated practices.

Perhaps the most significant pre-romantic concept besides those discussed in depth is "primitivism," which, like "romanticism," is a knotty term that is difficult to characterize breifly. Professor Lovejoy has remarked that "'...the history of primitivism is in great part a phase of a larger historical tendency [romanticism]....'"[9] But primitivism is also in evidence, although with different emphasis, in both the neo-classic and pre-romantic eras. And this partially accounts for the shades of meaning that have subsequently

[9] See Margaret M. Fitzgerald, First Follow Nature: Primitivism in English Poetry, 1725-1750 (New York, 1947), p. vii.

developed.

The neo-classicist generally viewed "nature" as universal and immutable. He felt that it was possible to perceive and know the universal truth of nature by employing careful scientific observation. But this "myth" began to disintegrate under close scrutiny as the century wore on, and the explanation of this phenomenon was that society had corrupted man's ability to know the truth of nature. As a result, the neo-classicists looked to a simpler mode of existence to find a state of nature where man was more ideal and uncorrupted. Nature became equated with "goodness." Those of pre-romantic preference started with the idea of inherent goodness found in nature, often exemplified by the "noble savage," and worked forward into romanticism.

From these beginnings there were various outgrowths of primitivism, and it is necessary to briefly define and limit Churchill's degree of participation in the overall concept before looking for examples in the poems.[10] The broader divisions of primitivism are "cultural" and "chronological." Both seek an ideal time notable for an absence of the evils the writer dislikes in his immediate surroundings. These divisions can be further subdivided into "soft" and "hard" primitivism, and these terms are roughly equivalent to

[10] I am indebted to Miss Fitzgerald's book, which was mentioned in the preceding footnote, for the terminology and general explication of primitivism that will follow.

the gentle and harsh treatments of subject matter.

The cultural variety, which was more prevalent in the early eighteenth century, is usually softer. Here the writer seeks lost innocence in his own age, and the subject frequently has a pastoral setting. The scene is idealized and is peopled with gentle swains. The whole backdrop lends an air of unreality, and Churchill's dislike for this kind of primitivism can be seen in The Prophecy of Famine and elsewhere. He pilloried writers who prettified their poems with the artificiality and affectation of the outmoded classical pastoral.

Chronological primitivism is backward-looking. In this type the artist looks at a time, often in his own country, but also during the "Golden Age" of Rome, when matters of daily life were simpler and nobler than in the current age. Churchill's viewpoint on native genius is an example of this. His defense of Shakespeare, in "An Epistle to R. L. L.," was used to condemn what he felt was the decayed state of English letters. Chronological primitivism is less idyllic and more grounded in the reality of actual persons and places. Whereas cultural primitivism frequently deals with quiet contemplation and melancholy meditation, such as is seen to some extent in Churchill's Night, chronological depended more on verisimilitude for its impact. In the latter contemporary evils are attacked with the pungency of black salt, and flashbacks to a superi-

or past are used for purposes of contrast. This brand of primitivism best suited Churchill's vituperative temperament.

During the discussion of Churchill's nationalistic love of English freedom in Chapter Five, The Duellist was examined in some detail. This poem was intended to vilify the condition of contemporary politics, particularly the enemies of Wilkes, and there are repeated contrasts of present evils with vanished English glories. An example of this use of primitivism by the satirist is found in Book I:

> Hail those Old Patriots, on whose tongue
> Persuasion in the Senate hung,
> Whilst They this sacred Cause maintain'd!
> Hail those Old Chiefs, to Honour train'd,
> Who spread, when other methods fail'd,
> War's bloody banner, and prevail'd!
> Shall Men like these unmention'd sleep
> Promiscuous with the common heap,
> And (Gratitude forbid the crime)
> Be carried down the stream of time
> In Shoals, unnotic'd and forgot,
> On LETHE's stream, like flags, to rot?
> No--they shall live, and each fair name,
> Recorded in the book of fame,
> Founded on Honour's basis, fast
> As the round Earth, to ages last.
> Some Virtues vanish with our breath,
> Virtue like this lives after death.
> Old Time himself, his scythe thrown by,
> Himself lost in Eternity,
> An everlasting crown shall twine
> To make a WILKES and SIDNEY join. (189-210)

The "Patriots" of former eras were willing to fight and die for freedom. But only Wilkes and a few others in the poet's day were fear-

less patriots. A similar utterance of primitivism comes in The Ghost, Book III:

> Here could we mention Chiefs of old,
> In plain and rugged honour bold,
> To Virtue kind, to Vice severe,
> Strangers to Bribery and Fear,
> Who kept no wretched Clans in awe,
> Who never broke, or warp'd the Law,
> Patriots, whom in her better days
> Old Rome might have been proud to raise,
> Who, steddy to their Country's claim
> Boldly stood up in Freedom's name,
> E'en to the teeth of Tyrant Pride,
> And, when they could no more, THEY DIED. (431-442)

Again, the "Chiefs of old" could not be matched by the eighteenth-century politicians. The "degen'rate" (444) contemporaries were motivated not by the public welfare but by the desire for "gold" (445).

These two stanzas are typical of several statements of primitivistic doctrine found at scattered intervals in Churchill's poems. He was more inclined toward hard chronological primitivism because it could be used to vent his hostilities toward the enemies of freedom; and he actually attacked the pastoral tendencies of soft cultural primitivism on occasion. Churchill did manifest in his poems an acceptance of primitivistic ideas, and this further allied him with the pre-romantics.

In the final assessment Charles Churchill defied efforts of rigid classification with either the neo-classical or pre-romantic

impulses in poetry. No attempt has been made in this thesis to discuss his affinities with the neo-classical "school" because of the several investigations of this aspect of his work that have already been completed. Churchill was a man of his times, and his satires also exhibit definite pre-romantic tendencies: his poetry frequently shows his acceptance of the cult of original genius, self-study and introspection in the approved romantic manner, a passionate dedication of his talents to the cause of English civil liberties and basic human freedom, and an abhorrence of authority and restraint in both life and literature. The interplay of the seemingly contradictory traditions in his poems typifies the state of flux of English writing and literary doctrine in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

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